

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री प्रशासन अकादमी

Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy
of Administration

मसूरी
MUSSOORIE

पुस्तकालय

LIBRARY

अवादि संख्या

Accession No.....

3637 111861

वर्ग संख्या

Class No.....

808.84

पुस्तक संख्या

Book No.....

khu

ESSAYS: INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

E S S A Y S

INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

BY

S. KHUDA BUKHSH, M.A. (OXON)



IDARAH-I ADABIYAT-I DELLI

2009 Qasimjan Street Delhi-6 (India)

I. A. D. Relgio-Philosophy Series No 9

111861

First Edition 19/2

Reprint 1977

Price Rs. 50.00

CECIL EM
KARMA

PRINTED IN INDIA

PUBLISHED BY MOHAMMAD AHMAD FOR IDARAH-I
ADBIYAT-I DELLI, 2009, QASIMJAN ST.. DELHI-6 AND
PRINTED AT JAYYED PRESS, BALLIMARAN, DELHI-6.

TO

SIR R. W. CARLYLE, C.S.I.,

I DEDICATE

THESE PAGES AS A TOKEN OF GREAT RESPECT
AND PROFOUND GRATITUDE

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM - - - - -	1
II. THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY - - -	25
III. THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM; ITS ORIGIN, ITS GROWTH, AND ITS RESULTS - - - - -	56
IV. GHALIB: AN APPRECIATION - - - - -	127
V. MY FATHER: HIS LIFE AND REMINISCENCES - - - - -	139
VI. HINDUSTANI LITERATURE - - - - -	204
VII. THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION - - - - -	213

ESSAYS: INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

I

THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM

I

I do not desire to explain the importance and significance of Islam among the religious systems of the world; nor am I to fix and ascertain the exact position of Mohamed as a religious teacher among the world's great teachers of religions. My effort in this paper is simpler, and yet not altogether free from bewildering perplexities. I desire to explain what Islam is and what its teachings are—Islam as preached and delivered by the Prophet of Arabia; Islam stripped of the accretions of ages of theological disputes and controversies; in other words, to sketch out, to the best of my light and leading, Islam of the Prophet Mohamed. Difficult though this task is, it is not indeed a hopeless venture for one who has kept himself clear and free from narrow sectarianism.

To fully appreciate the message of Mohamed, it is essential that I should say something about the condition of Arabia before Islam. I must readily admit that so far as the Pagan Arabia is concerned, we are

in great dearth of authorities. Our information is shadowy, fitful, and fragmentary, and the industry of European scholars (such as Caussin de Perceval, Krehl, Wellhausen, Robertson Smith, and Sir Charles Lyall) has succeeded but in lifting the veil at its fringe. But however partial and unsatisfactory the account is of the Pagan days, we can yet form an idea of the life that the Pagan Arabs led, and the thoughts that swayed and animated their conduct and their deeds. I will therefore describe "The Pre-Islamic Arabia" as briefly as I can.

The Pre-Islamic Arabs were not a nation. Of the sense of nationality, indeed, they had not the vaguest conception, though they were linked by community of speech. Arabia was a sum-total of loose and disconnected congeries of tribes, and the tribe was the source and the limit of social and political obligation. Beyond the tribe there lay no duty and no obligation either. Political relations were moral, for morality was confined within the limits of the tribe. Political organization was represented by the corporate feeling which found expression in the exercise of the duties of brotherhood. Within the pale of the tribe obtained the prohibition to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, etc., etc. Beyond it there was no such prohibition. Fidelity to one's kinsman was an imperative duty, apart from any question of the justness of the cause.* Outside the tribe there was nothing but constant plunder and unceasing warfare. "Certain large groups were, indeed, almost continually at war with one another. Ma'add, the people of the Hijaz and

* Wellhausen, "Reste Arabischen Heidentums," p. 226.

Al-yamamah generally, looked upon Al-yaman as their natural prey, and were constantly raiding the herds of their southern neighbours. Between Tamim and Bakr, son of Wail, there was permanent bad blood. Ghatafan and Hawazin had a standing feud. In the north the kingdom of Al-Hirah, the representative of Persian predominance, was the hereditary enemy of Ghassan, the representative of the might of Rome." (Lyall, "Ancient Arabian Poetry," p. xxiii.) Arabia, before Islam, was thus a theatre of internecine warfare, restrained but partially by the introduction of blood-money. There was compensation for everything for which vengeance could be exacted. All crimes were assessed as economic damage. Every loss of honour, property, or life could be appraised by agreement, all having their price in camels. We thus see that the Arabs before Islam had scarcely emerged from barbaric conditions.* There was no social order, no organized government. The law of sheer brute force prevailed, untempered and unrestrained by any civilizing or controlling influence. Nor did they attain to any refined idea of religion. Their religion was nothing more or less than gross fetishism—the worship of tree and stone, the veneration of certain personified divine attributes, meaningless ritual and ceremonials. The true religious spirit they never succeeded in grasping, and the fear of God never exercised any real, practical influence over their conduct and actions. It was

* I have avoided further details here, as I have dealt with this subject at length in my "Contributions to the History of Islamic Civilization," pp. 146-169.

reserved for Islam to instil into them the sense of responsibility to God, and to make this idea of human responsibility the guiding and controlling principle of life. To all appearance the Arabs honoured the gods, went on pilgrimage to their sanctuaries, made sacrifices in the temples, anointed with the blood of the victims gods carved out of stone or made of wood, consulted the oracles when in difficulty, and questioned them about the future. But all this was sham and counterfeit. Of real, genuine, religious feeling there was none. This empty show, however, was kept up for purposes of gain, the manifold sanctuaries yielding large incomes to certain noble families and clans.*

In a soil apparently so uncongenial, how did Islam strike its root? This is an interesting and fascinating question and we must try to solve it here. The solution of this question is to be found in the existence of Judaism and Christianity on the one hand, and in the commercial activity of the Arabs on the other. By commerce the Arabs acquired an extended knowledge of foreign nations and their civilization. Frequent contact with the outer world widened their intellectual horizon and awakened in them higher and more spiritual thoughts. They learnt new ideas, acquired new habits, and, what was most valuable of all, they learnt to think for themselves. But not merely did travel in foreign countries and intercourse with foreign people exercise a disruptive influence, but there were forces, alike subversive and destructive,

* Deutsch, "Literary Remains," p. 87. For further information see Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichtliche Streifzüge" (my translation, p. 49).

nearer home. In Arabia itself the two streams of Christianity and Judaism flowed side by side with the Arab heathenism.

That Christianity had made a considerable advance among the Arabs is clear from the fact that, at the time of Mohamed, it was considerably diffused not merely among the Rabia tribes but even among the Tamim. Nor did the Taiyy altogether escape its influence. Its growth, however, was not so favourable in Hijaz and Central Arabia, but even here Christian ideas undoubtedly made their way through commerce and social intercourse. Similarly the Jewish influence was equally powerful. When the Jews came to Arabia we do not definitely know, but Dr. Nöldeke points out that a great Jewish immigration into Arabia cannot be fixed prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and Hadrian. At all events, it is clear that at the time of Mohamed there was a large colony of Jews at Taima, Khaibar, Yathrib, Fedak and Yaman. They did not live scattered amidst the Arab population but kept together, and, though despised by the Arabs, they were yet indispensable to them as merchants, jewellers, and goldsmiths. It would, therefore, be not an error to suppose that they exerted no small spiritual influence over the Arabs.* That this is no unfounded theory or improbable supposition is evidenced by the fact that in the works of four of the most prominent Arabian poets of the Pre-Islamic time—An-Nabigah, Zuhair, Al-Asha and Labid—we find expressions which show that they, at least, if not the wild

* Wellhausen, "Reste," pp. 30, 231.

wanderers of the desert, knew very well what a spiritual religion meant.* Ibn Qutaibah enumerates drinking, joy, wrath, and love among the "motive causes" which speed the poet, but we cannot fail to detect in their poems an undercurrent of deep religious feelings. Individual minds felt a sense of uneasiness and sought to find some plausible solution of the mysteries of life and death, and traces of such a frame of mind we notice frequently in ancient Arab poetry. On no other basis, indeed, can we explain the lamentations of the royal poet Imru-ul-Qais over the worthlessness of the life of pleasure that he had led and the conversion to Christianity of Qais B. Zuhair, the leader of the Abs in the long fratricidal war against the Dhubian.[†] In considering the rise of Islam we cannot be unwatchful of the course of contemporary thought or unmindful of the religious forces which contributed to its success. Such, indeed, were the forces at work in Arabia before Mohamed—forces which could not have failed to stir higher thoughts in enlightened minds and to create a reaction against the Arab heathenism. And a reaction, indeed, did set in. A band of distinguished men, whom we must recognize as the heralds and standard-bearers of Islam, no longer willing to tolerate idolatrous practices, definitely cut themselves adrift from the Arabian Paganism. They called themselves Hanifs, a word of doubtful meaning and the cause of much controversy. "The most acceptable conjecture

* Lyall, "Ancient Arabian Poetry," p. 93.

† In Wellhausen's "Reste," p. 229, will be found the passage in question from Imru-ul-Qais.

seems to me," says Sir Charles Lyall, "to be that of Sprenger, that it is connected with the Hebrew *Hanef* (heretic)." Hanifism had certain specific features: rejection of idolatry, abstention from certain kinds of food, and the worship of "the God of Abraham." Ascetic practices, such as the wearing of sackcloth, are also ascribed to some of the Hanifs.* Islamic tradition has handed down to us the names of a number of religious thinkers before Mohamed, who are described as Hanifs, and of whom the following is a list :

1. Warakah b. Naufal of Kuraish.
2. Ubaidulla b. Jahsh.
3. Uthman b. Al Huwarith.
4. Zaid b. Amr b. Naufal.

Ibn Kutaibah adds to the above :

5. Urbab b. al Bara' of Abdul Qais.
6. Umayyah b. Abi-s-Salt.
7. Kuss b. Saidah of Iyad ("Aghani," xiv. 41-44); Mohamed heard him at Ukadh, but he died before the mission.
8. Abu Kais Sinrah b. Abi Anas.
9. Khalid b. Sinan b. Ghaith of Abs.

To these Sir Charles Lyall adds :

10. Abu Kais Saifi, Ibn Al-Aslat of the Aus-allah of Yathrib.

It is impossible to misconceive the importance and significance of Hanifism in the origin of Islam. The path was already prepared for it, and Islam offered to the Arabs what they were long in search for: a moral, ethical, and spiritual teaching; a higher form of worship, and last, but not least, fraternity and union. The tribal cults were henceforward merged in a higher

* *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, October, 1903, p. 773. Khuda Bukhsh, "Islamic Civilization," p. 147, and the authorities therein cited.

worship, and the nobler energies of the Arab race obtained a religious consecration.

Islam became the starting-point for the Arabs for conquests, alike spiritual and temporal. With Islam it became the prerogative of the Arab race to be "an ensign to the nations," to bear and to carry the banner of the true God to the remotest corner of the earth. Hence the unceasing campaigns and hence the far-extending conquests.

II

It is clear beyond doubt that Christian and Jewish influences to a large extent unsettled and disturbed the beliefs of the Pagan Arabs and paved the way for the Prophet. Resistance to his faith there was, but it was resistance on the part of those who sought to maintain the old faith and superstition, not on account of any warmth of conviction or sincerity of zeal, but on account of the fear and apprehension that the success of Islam would mean loss of large incomes derived from the temples and old heathen practices.* But resistance, founded upon such a selfish basis, could not prevent, and, indeed, did not prevent, the onward progress of Islam. In the deadly conflict between Islam and the Arab heathenism Islam triumphed.

We now proceed to inquire what was the basis, or, in other words, what were the sources from which Islam was derived. Islam freely borrowed

* Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichte des Orients," vol. i., p. 24.

from Judaism and Christianity, and even did not hesitate to adopt practices prevalent in Pre-Islamic Arabia. In fashioning his religion the Prophet adopted an eclectic method, retaining or rejecting from the older systems whatever seemed to him necessary and proper. It is not exactly within the scope of my paper precisely to specify or accurately to define the exact obligation of Islam to Christianity or Judaism. Such a discussion would take me far afield. Professor Wellhausen is inclined to belittle the influence of Judaism in the birth and infancy of Islam, and points to the Islamic conception of Jesus as the greatest of the prophets before Mohamed as a conclusive proof of his contention. But the present writer is not prepared to attach much weight to this argument. If the Islamic conception of Jesus, indeed, is to be put forward as indicating the absence of Judaic influence on early Islam, with equal force might the Islamic conception of Jesus be urged as subversive of the theory of Christian influence, so stoutly advocated by Professor Wellhausen.* The basis of dogmatic Christianity, namely the sonship of Christ, Mohamed inveighed against early and late. It would be idle to deny the indebtedness of Islam to Judaism. Mohamed has not merely accepted dogmas and doctrines of Judaism, minute Talmudical ordinances, but has even adopted in their entirety some of the Jewish practices, and, far above all these,

* Wellhausen, p. 236 *et seq.* Professor Wellhausen admits Jewish influence in the Islamic theocracy and in the belief that the Prophet, as representative of God, is alone entitled to rule and govern, to the exclusion of all other powers. See also Deutsch, p. 171.

that which, indeed, constitutes the very foundation of Islam, namely, the conception of a severe and uncompromising monotheism.* The fact is that both Judaism and Christianity were used, and used freely, by the Prophet in building up his religion. Nor is this a new theory. The Prophet never put himself forward as introducing something new, but he invariably claimed for himself the honour of reviving the old and the true beliefs which had fallen into neglect and oblivion. But besides the Jewish and Christian sources, not a small portion of Islamic ritual and ceremonials were mere reproductions of Pre-Islamic practices. The entire ceremonies relating to the pilgrimage (Hajj) and the sacred service at the temple of Mecca, have survived in Islam with little or no variation from the days of Arab heathenism;† the only change that Mohamed effected in them was to allow the pilgrims to put on a particular pilgrim dress, consisting of two pieces of cloth, of which one covers the hip and the other breast and shoulders; while the head has to be kept uncovered, as in ancient days, when they used to make up their hair into a sort of wig by means of some glutinous substance. And so, indeed, it has remained to this day, the prescribed pilgrim costume. After visiting the Kabah they used, in heathen days, to visit the two rocky hills of Safa and Merwah, on which were placed two bronze idols.

* See the learned monograph of Geiger, "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen."

† Lyall, p. 93; Von Kremer's "Culturgeschichtliche Streifzüge" (my translation, p. 47). The author of "Ras' Mal in-Nadim" (Bankipore MS.) gives an account of heathen practices (fol. 17 *et seq.*), specially drawing attention to those retained by Islam.

Mohamed went so far in his toleration of the heathen pilgrimage customs that he suffered the visit to Safa and Marwah to continue as before, but had the two idols removed. Of the history of the origin of the forms of the prayer, prostration, ablution, and fasts, our knowledge is vague, uncertain, and shadowy.

Islam has, says Von Kremer,

"largely drawn upon Judaism, Christianity, the religion of Zoroaster, and possibly even upon Manichaeanism. From Parsiism it has taken both directly and indirectly. A number of obviously Parsi ideas have penetrated into Islam through the channel of Jewish books—notably the Talmud. The doctrine of the Resurrection, most of the legends relating to heaven and hell, and the entire system of demonology, have found their way into the Qur'an through Judaism. So, indeed, did the description of the trial and the tortures of the dead in the grave by two angels, *Munkar* and *Nakir*. The idea of the bridge *sirat*, as thin as a hair, which leads to paradise across the abyss of hell, is certainly derived from the Parsis, having passed over into the Qur'an through the Midrash. But Islam has not hesitated to borrow directly from Parsiism. It is a significant fact that the word *din*, which so repeatedly occurs in the Qur'an, has been borrowed from the Parsi books. In the Huzveresh it appears in exactly the same form (old Bactrian, *dane*)."^{*}

It is not suggested that the Prophet had access to the written books of either the Jews or the Christians; though in some passages of the Qur'an we can trace direct resemblances to the text of the Old Testament and the Mishna.[†] His knowledge of the Jewish and Christian books, at times faulty and imperfect to

* See note †, p. 10.

† Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichtliche Streifzüge" (my translation, p. 47). Compare Qur'an, xxi. 105 with Ps. xxxvii. 29; 1-5 with Ps. xxvii. The New Testament: Compare vii. 48 with Luke xvi. 24; xlvi. 19 with Luke xvi. 25. Then again, verse 37 corresponds almost word for word with Mishna Sanh., iv. 7 also ii. 183 with Mishna Ber., 1, 2. Nöldeke, "Sketches from Eastern History," p. 31.

a degree, was derived almost exclusively from oral communications.

I trust I have said enough to illustrate the condition of Arabia before Islam and the sources from which the Prophet of Arabia received his religious inspiration. I now go on to explain Islam and its tenets.

III

Mr. Ameer Ali explains Islam as "striving after righteousness," but Prof. Hirschfeld, in his luminous "Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'an," very correctly points out that Mr. Ameer Ali's definition only reflects the theoretical and moral side of the question—limited to the initial stage of Islam.*

The term Islam, as time went by, included the whole of the theoretical and practical constitution of the faith, and as such it is interpreted by Al-Ghazzali in his *Ihya ul-ulum* (vol. i., p. 104). Islam, says he, is an expression for submission and unquestioning obedience, abandonment of insubordination, defiance and opposition. And it is in this light, indeed, that the Prophet himself regarded Islam. "The Bedwins say (xlix. 14) we believe, Speak! you shall not 'believe' (only) but say we practise Islam (Aslamna)." In Surah iii. 17 (*cf.* v. 79) Islam is identified with *din* (*cf.* lxi. 7-9), and the relation between the two synonyms, says Prof. Hirschfeld, is broadly discussed

* "Life and Teachings of Mohamed," p. 226; Professor Hirschfeld, p. 14.

by Al-Shahrastani (*Milal*, pp. 25-27) and is stated to embrace the five duties, *viz.*: Testifying to the unity of God and the Divine inspiration of Mohamed, reciting prayers, giving alms, fasting in the month *Ramadhan*, and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. The fundamental basis of Islam is the unity of God, stern, unbending monotheism, and this doctrine of the unity of God is proclaimed in the Qur'an, in season and out of season, and ever and anon with augmented emphasis. To associate gods with God is the most unpardonable sin, and the Prophet's extensive vocabulary of vituperation is never exhausted in attacking those who associate gods with God. In Surah vi. (vers. 74-79) we have one of the most charming passages testifying to the unity of God :

" And remember when Abraham said to his father, Azar, thou takest those images as God ? verily I see that thou and thy people are in manifest error.

" And so did we show Abraham the domain of the heavens and of the earth that he might be one of those who are established in knowledge. And when the night overshadowed him he beheld a star, ' This,' said he, ' is my Lord ' ; but when it set, he cried, ' I love not gods which set.' And when he beheld the moon uprising, ' This,' said he, ' is my Lord ' ; but when it set, he said, ' Surely, if my Lord guide me not I shall be of those who go astray.'

" And when he beheld the sun arise, he said, ' This is my Lord ; this is the greatest.' But when it set, he said, ' O, my people, I share not with you the guilt of joining gods with God.'

" I verily turn my face to him who hath created the heavens and the earth, following the right religion ; and I am not one of those who add gods to God."

Not a whit did Gibbon * exaggerate the truth when he wrote : " The creed of Mohamed is free from suspicion

* Gibbon, Bury's edition, vol. v., p. 339.

or ambiguity, and the Qur'an is a glorious testimony to the unity of God. The Prophet of Mecca rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets, on the rational principle that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish." And, again, says the historian of the Roman Empire: "These sublime truths, thus announced in the language of the Prophet, are firmly held by his disciples and defined with metaphysical precision by the interpreters of the Qur'an. A philosophic atheist might subscribe the popular creed of Mohammedans, a creed too sublime perhaps for our present faculties."

The unity of God, therefore, is the central faith of Islam, and connected with it, by natural process as it were, is the belief that man is responsible to the Creator for his actions and deeds. This belief the Pre-Islamic Arab never knew or conceived, and the Prophet Mohamed, by inculcating this belief, not only laid the foundation of a spiritual life among his countrymen, but also that of a well-organized society, soon destined to grow into a magnificent empire. The sphere of duty and obligation, charity and sympathy, confined hitherto merely to tribesmen, was widened and extended, and the narrow tribal tie was lost in the larger brotherhood of faith. At this distance of time it is perhaps difficult for us fully to realize the influence of this teaching, but to it alone must we ascribe the dethronement of those ideals of Arabian Paganism which the author of the "*Muhammedanische Studien*" has so graphically described, comparing and contrasting them with the

higher ideals substituted by Islam.* The religion of the Prophet, like the wand of a magician, completely and utterly changed the life of the Arabs. It hushed their tribal disputes into silence; it destroyed their insularity; it set up a purer and a more refined standard of domestic life; it opened before them fresh vistas of spiritual happiness and temporal success.

Next to the unity of God, Islam enjoins five daily prayers upon its followers. It is curious that the Qur'an lays down no rule as to the manner in which the prayer should be offered. Apparently, as Mr. Ameer Ali† points out, the practice of the Prophet has associated certain rites and ceremonies with the due observance of prayer. In the Mohamedan prayer we observe the Jewish practice of standing erect, the Christian of prostration and a third of inclination.‡ Originally the Prophet instituted three daily prayers.§ Their extension to five was an innovation of the late Meccan period; the details of the purity legislation appear to have still later. "Yet the theory," says Prof. Margoliouth, "that God should be approached only by persons in a state of purity was known in South Arabia before Mohamed's time, whence it is probable that his earliest converts were instructed therein."

Prayers are to be performed five times in the course

* Goldziher, "Muhammedanische Studien," vol. i., the chapter on Muruwwa und Din; Nicholson, "Literary History of the Arabs," pp. 177-179; Browne, "Literary History of Persia," p. 189 *et seq.*

† "Life and Teachings of Mohamed," p. 263.

‡ Margoliouth, "Life of Mohamed," p. 102.

§ Ibn Sad, vol. iv., part i., p. 159.

of every day : between daybreak and sunrise, between noon and the "asr" (which later period is about mid-time between noon and nightfall), between the "asr" and sunset, between sunset and the "asha" (or the period when the darkness of night commences), and at or after the "asha."* It is considered more meritorious to take part in the public *salat* of the community conducted by a leader (Imam) than to discharge the *salat* by oneself. Von Kremer has rightly emphasized the importance of the Muslim prayer by recognizing the mosque as the drill-ground for the warlike believers of early Islam. In stern discipline, in unconditional obedience, says Von Kremer, the author of the "Culturgeschichte des Orients," lay the greatest achievement of Mohamed and the real secret of the strength of Islam.† The five daily prayers where the leader (the Imam) stood before the community, closely arrayed behind him, and where every movement of his was imitated with military precision, by the hundreds of the faithful assembled in the mosque, served, among the Muslims, in those times, the purpose of what is known now as the drill-ground, a school where the people learnt to assemble, to move in a body and to follow the Commander.

In the Qur'an : the command to pay the poor-tax (*zakat*) directly follows the command to pray : perform the prayers and pay the poor-tax. This tax had a

* In Lane Poole's "Arabian Society in the Middle Ages," pp. 1-24, the reader will find a detailed account of the religious institutions of Islam.

† Vol. i., p. 10.

‡ Surah, 2, 40.

strong communistic complexion which is evidenced by the following tradition : " The prophet sent Mu'adh to Yaman and told him : summon the people to accept the confession of faith, namely, there is no God but Allah and I that am his prophet ; if they listen to it, teach them further that God has ordained five daily prayers ; if they are also agreeable to this, teach them further that God has enjoined the poor-tax (sadakah) payable by the wealthy upon their property for distribution among the poor."* This tax was annually payable upon camels, oxen (bulls and cows) and buffaloes, sheep and goats, horses and mules and asses, and gold and silver (whether in money or ornaments, etc.), provided the property was of a certain amount ; as five camels, thirty oxen, forty sheep, five horses, two hundred dirhams, or twenty dinars.† The proportion is generally one-fortieth, which is to be paid in kind or in money or other equivalent.

The third most important obligation enjoined by Islam is fasting in the month of *Ramadhan*. The Muslim must abstain from eating and drinking and from every indulgence of the senses, every day during the month of *Ramadhan*, from the first appearance of daybreak until sunset, unless physically incapacitated. The last but not least is the pilgrimage to Mecca and Mount Arafat, which the Muslim must perform at least once in his life.

These then—namely, the unity of God, the belief in the Divine mission of the Prophet, five daily prayers, fasting in the month of *Ramadhan* and the

* Von Kremer, *Kulturgeschichte*, vol. i., p. 50.

† Lane Poole, "Arabian Society," p. 14.

pilgrimage, are the essentials of Islam. The one supreme mission of the Prophet was to create and to maintain an absolute brotherhood in faith. All Muslims were declared equal, irrespective of birth, rank or profession; and the world has never seen, perhaps, a more perfect democracy than the one called into being by the Prophet. Truly, the most worthy of honour in the sight of God, says the Qur'an, is he who feareth Him most; for the faithful are brethren; whereupon make peace between your brethren. A similar refrain runs through the parting sermon of the Prophet: "O men! God has taken away from you the arrogance and pride of ancestry of heathen days. An Arab has no excellence or superiority over a barbarian than that which is secured to him by his God fearing and righteousness. Ye are all the progeny of Adam, and Adam himself is of the Earth."

No caste and no priesthood does Islam recognize. Every Muslim is his own priest and every spot of land is his mosque to pray and to worship Allah. For no other purpose than to keep alive the sense of corporate unity of the Muslims did the Prophet declare the superiority of the public prayer over prayer by oneself and establish the institution of pilgrimage.

Year after year, from all parts of the Islamic world, streamed to Mekka Muslims in thousands and tens of thousands, to worship Allah at the Ka'bah and to perform the Hajj. There, at Mekka, year after year, Muslims of divers nationalities recognized and realized the potent spell of their faith and felt more deeply and keenly than ever the tie which bound them together. Moreover, as Von Kremer

points out, there did the Muslims obtain an opportunity of listening to the lectures of far-famed professors and men of letters, who attracted, year by year, an ever-increasing audience. There, indeed, did Islam shine forth in its full lustre, attracting and alluring, entralling and captivating its followers, as it could do nowhere else. Every spot associated with some historical incident, every place connected with some important event or other of the life of the teacher, awakened the love and fired the enthusiasm of Muslims for the son of Abdullah, the maker of Arabia and the founder of Islam.

In his fascinating book, "The Life and Teachings of Mohamed," Mr. Ameer Ali has admirably summed up the Islamic teachings : "Nothing can be simpler or more in accord with the advance of the human intellect than the teachings of the Arabian prophet. The few rules for religious ceremonial which he prescribed were chiefly with the object of maintaining discipline and uniformity, so necessary in certain stages of society, but they were by no means of an inflexible character. He allowed them to be broken in cases of illness or for other causes. 'God wishes to make things easy for you, for,' says the Qur'an, 'man was created weak.' The legal principles which he enunciated were either delivered as answers to questions put to him as the Chief Magistrate of Medina or to remove or correct patent evils. The Prophet's Islam recognized no ritual likely to distract the mind from the thought of the one God, no law to keep enthralled the conscience of advancing humanity."

Nothing was more distant from the Prophet's thought than to fetter the mind or to lay down fixed, immutable, unchanging laws for his followers. The Qur'an is a book of guidance to the faithful, and not, to be sure, an obstacle in the path of their social, moral, legal, and intellectual progress. The requirements of Islam are at once easy and simple, and leave scope to Muslims to take part in their duties as subjects or citizens, to attend to their religious obligations without sacrificing their worldly prosperity, and to adopt whatever is good in any community or civilization, without any interference on the part of their religion.

IV

I shall now make a few general observations on the religion of the Prophet of Arabia. Whatever Islam may have become through pharisaic artificiality and theological subtlety, its leading principles are as broad as the starry heavens and as enduring as the everlasting hills. It contains, in common with other great religions, those eternal truths which are only too liable to be forgotten in blind zeal, in warmth of controversy, in sectarian narrow-mindedness, in religious fanaticism, but which our education and culture teach us to discover and appreciate, wherever we find them. The governing principle of all religions is the same. In the language of the Apostle James : " Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from

the world." This is the burden of all religions and this the burden of Islam.

The kernel and doctrine of Islam, Goethe has found in the second *surah* which begins as follows: "This is the Book. There is no doubt in the same. A guidance to the righteous, who believe in the unseen, who observe the prayer, and who give alms of that which we have vouchsafed unto them. And who believe in that which has been sent down unto thee—(the Revelation) which had been sent down to those before thee, and who believe in the life to come. They walk in the guidance of their Lord, and they are the blessed. As to them who believe not—it is indifferent to them whether thou exhortest them or exhortest them not. They will not believe. Sealed hath Allah their hearts and their ears, and over their eye is darkness, and theirs will be a great punishment.—" "And in this wise," Goethe continues, "we have *surah* after *surah*. Belief and unbelief are divided into higher and lower. Heaven and hell await the believers or deniers. Detailed injunctions of things allowed and forbidden, legendary stories of Jewish and Christian religion, amplifications of all kinds, boundless tautologies and repetitions, form the body of this sacred volume, which, to us, as often as we approach it, is repellent anew, next attracts us ever anew and fills us with admiration, and finally forces us into veneration."

This passage, indeed, is as good a summary as any other, but there is one, and in this same chapter, still more explicit, illustrating the catholicity of the Prophet's mind and his discerning judgment. When

Mohamed, says Deutsch,* told his adherents at Medina no longer to turn in prayer towards Jerusalem but towards the Ka'bah at Mekka, to which their fathers had turned, and he was blamed for this innovation, he replied : "That is not righteousness : whether ye turn your faces towards east or west, God's is the east as well as the west. But verily righteousness is his who believes in God, in the day of judgment, in the angels, in the book and the prophets ; who bestows his wealth for God's sake upon kindred, and orphans, and the poor, and the homeless, and all those who ask ; and also upon delivering the captives ; he who is steadfast in prayer, giveth alms, who stands firmly by his covenants, when he has once entered into them ; and who is patient in adversity, in hardship and in times of trial. These are the righteous, and these are the God-fearing." What a noble idea of life and religion do we find here ! It is not merely the recitation of prayers which constitutes righteousness, but in solemnly acting the religion we profess ; in tender regard for the poor and the orphan, the forlorn and the suffering ; in relieving the miseries of the captives, in holding by the promises made, in enduring with calm fortitude the trials and reverses of fortune. Here, in this passage, we have the key to Islam, nay, I would go farther and say a key to all religions. It is only the clouded vision which sees difference between one religion and the other ; to one who has the eyes to see and the heart to feel, all religions appear as but a reflection of one and the same light.

* "Literary Remains," p. 128.

ماؤه تو از مسجو و میخانه کام است
 اے خانه ترانه از ترا خانه کدام است
 از کشت روزن نه شود مهر مکرر
 اے کچ نظران کعبه و بخانه کدام است

This was the spirit of the Prophet's religion which he preached in the Qur'an in every accent of pleading and warning, of pathos and hope, of repentance and forgiveness. He stood firm by his faith, unshaken by threats and persuasion. His success, indeed, marks the ascent of the soul, of the higher and nobler nature of man from the darkness to the light. Nor was it a different light to that which had appeared to humanity "at sundry times and in divers manners." His preaching fell on the Arabs, still in the spring-tide of their national life, and laid a tremendous hold upon their mind and their imagination, changing and transforming them and giving them, as it were, a new existence. It taught them firmness of resolve, contempt of death, singleness of purpose, unity and fraternity, and it gave them that intensity of religious fervour which became the most valued asset of their national life. Above all, says Dr. Nöldeke, Islam gave and gives to those who profess it a feeling of confidence such as is imparted by hardly any other faith.* And, indeed, it was this, again, which made them great warriors and conquerors of the world.†

Islam possesses an inherent force and vitality which nothing can weaken or destroy. It carries within it

* "Sketches from Eastern History," p. 27.

† Von Kremer, vol. i., p. 92.

germs of progress and development, and has great powers of adaptability to changing circumstances. There is nothing in its teachings which conflicts with or militates against modern civilization, and the moment Muslims realize this truth their future will be assured and their greatness only a question of time. Modern Islam, with its hierarchy of priesthood, gross fanaticism, appalling ignorance and superstitious practices, is, indeed, a discredit to the Islam of the Prophet Mohamed. Instead of unity we have Islam torn into factions, instead of culture we have indifference to learning: instead of liberal-minded toleration we have gross bigotry. But this intellectual darkness must necessarily be followed by intellectual dawn, and we trust that it is not now far distant or too long in coming.

An impartial consideration of the life of the Prophet and his teachings cannot fail to awaken the warmest admiration for the man and his mission. Whatever may be the defects in the Qur'an, even non-Muslims must concede that it is a noble testimony to the unity of God, and whatever may be the blemishes in the life of the Prophet, none but a perverse mind will regard him as anything but sincere in his conviction, honest in his purpose, and unshaken in his resolve. Mohamedan civilization was the outcome of Mohamedan faith, and nothing but Islam can again give to the Mohamedans what they have lost—their civilization, their culture, and their empire.

II

THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

In Islam the functions of the priest and the sovereign were concentrated in one and the same person. Mohamed was alike the Prophet of God and the temporal ruler of the Arabs. He thus united in himself the two functions of the king and the spiritual chief. He was, so to speak, Cæsar and pope in one; and this feature of the Islamic sovereignty has continued to the latest times, though indeed with important changes and modifications. We do not for a moment suggest that circumstances were moulded and shaped to suit preconceived theories, but rather, as is always the case, theories were fashioned out of the events which took place. With the rise of the Abbasids begins the age of theories and speculation, since it was under them that the foreign influences slowly and silently commenced to leaven the entire social and political conditions of the Caliphate.

We propose to discuss in this paper the Islamic conception of sovereignty, but the bare statement of political theories without reference to facts which had called them into being would alike be barren and

26 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

unprofitable. We therefore consider it necessary to discuss the theory of sovereignty in the light of the history of the Caliphate. The history of the Caliphate might be divided into three unequal parts, each, indeed, with strong characteristics of its own : the patriarchal period ; the period of the Omayyads, or, as it might be called, the rule of the Arab aristocracy ; and the period of the Abbasids, or in other words, the rule of the Persians, the Turks and the Kurds.* By the patriarchal period we mean the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali. During this period the strongest tie that united the Arabs was that of religion and conquest.

The Caliphs were the true successors of Mohamed in matters spiritual and temporal, and fully justified their position by their single-hearted devotion and loyalty to the cause of Islam. For them no consideration was so supreme and no interest so engrossing as that of Islam. Impelled by no other motive than that of the expansion of Islam and fighting the world in its cause, the question of succession, though keenly discussed even then, did not assume the importance and bearing which it did in the subsequent history of the Caliphate. After the death of the Prophet, Islam was threatened with immediate destruction, and the question came to the front as to who should step into the place of Mohamed as the leader of the growing Islamic community. Opinion was divided. The Muhajirin and the Ansar would not agree and a proposal was made that each party should select a leader of its own. But the fiery Omar—to whom

* Diercks, "Die Araber im Mittelalter," p. 85.

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY 27

Islam is more indebted than to anybody else after Mohamed—decided the fate of the day by offering homage to Abu Bakr, the father-in-law and the most trusted counsellor of the prophet. The die was cast and Abu Bakr was chosen. The dense cloud which hung over the Muslim horizon was thus rolled away, and a crisis, which might have ended most fatally for Islam, averted.

With regard to this election it is necessary to note two things. Abu Bakr could not have been accepted as Caliph by the Muslim community if the idea of hereditary succession at all had then existed ; for from the point of view of hereditary succession none was more entitled to the Caliphate than Ali, the husband of Fatima. In the second place it is to be borne in mind that when Omar had put Abu Bakr forward, as the successor of Mohamed, and had done homage to him, the devolution of authority was not perfectly complete till ratified, the following day, by the general homage of the Muslim community. The question naturally suggests itself whether Omar was at all guided by any principle or precedent in adopting the course that he did adopt, or was induced to do so by the desire to prevent a breach or division among the Muslims. For the solution of this question we find a most important key in the Pre-Islamic history of the Arabs. The Arabs, from time immemorial, have been averse to submitting to any authority or government of either a foreign ruler or a native king, and though, no doubt, portions of Arabia came under the Roman rule or Persian hegemony, still Hegaz—the birthplace of Mohamed and the cradle of

28 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

Islam—never bent its neck to the authority of an earthly sovereign. In its independence it always gloried, and with jealous pride it has preserved and maintained it to this day. The Arabs—divided into clans and tribes—acknowledged no authority other than that of their tribal chiefs, chosen and elected by the members of the tribe *. In the election of their chief they were guided mainly by seniority of age and nobility of birth.

It would not, therefore, be rash to conclude that in putting forward the candidature of Abu Bakr—the most senior and the most respected of the Muslims—Omar was only giving effect to a principle well established among the Arabs—the principle of seniority and nobility of birth. The succession of Omar was effected by the nomination of Abu Bakr, while that of Othman was decided by a conclave appointed by Omar. When Omar was mortally wounded he did not die on the spot, but had sufficient time to make arrangements for the appointment of his successor. He appointed a Council of regency consisting of the most important companions of the Prophet, viz., Ali, Othman, Zubair, Talha, Sa'd, Abdur Rahman ibn Auf. With these he associated his son Abdallah, who was only to take part in the deliberations; but he expressly enjoined that Abdallah, though he was to give his casting vote in case of an equal division, was on no account to stand as a candidate for the Caliphate. This fact, perhaps, is the strongest proof of the proposition that the idea of a hereditary monarchy did not then at all exist. Nor

* Professor Wallin's "Journey from Cairo to Medina and Mekka," p. 180.

was it indeed conceivable ; foreign as it was to the inherited traditions and deep-rooted sentiments of the Arabs. Ali comes fourth on the list, and the fact that he was passed over not once or twice, but three times, makes it further clear beyond doubt that the idea of a hereditary succession was quite foreign and unknown at that time, and has been, much later, engrafted upon Islam to support the claims of the Abbasids. We shall consider, in the sequel, the importance of these various modes of succession.

Though no doubt an attempt was made as early as the time of Muawiah to establish the hereditary Caliphate, the elective principle was so firmly planted among the Arabs that the Omayyads—invested with large powers as they were—could not altogether disregard or override it. The suggestion to constitute the Caliphate a hereditary office was first made to Muawiah by Al Mughira ibn Shu'bah—the earliest Muslim forger of false coins—and it was upon his advice that homage was obtained for Yazid during the lifetime of the first Omayyad.* The founder of the Omayyad dynasty was the first to call himself king.† It called forth the bitter observation of Sa'id ibn Musyab : “ May God retaliate upon Muawiah for he was the first who converted this thing (the rule over the faithful) into a *mulk*. ” ‡ There is a story which may be related here as indicating the feeling with which the Muslims regarded the Omayyads. Sa'd ibn Abi Wakkas presented himself before Muawiah, after

* Goldziher, “ Muh. Studien,” vol. ii., p. 32 ; Zydan, “ Umayyads and Abbasids,” Professor Margoliouth’s translation, p. 61.

† Al-Yaqubi, vol. ii., p. 276.

‡ Goldziher, vol. ii., p. 31.

30 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

the sovereignty of the latter had been confirmed, and saluted him as king. Muawiah, laughing, asked him what harm it would have done to have used the title "Commander of the Faithful"? Sa'd's answer was: "What! can you talk of this with a smile? I assure you that I had rather not have the post if it was to be acquired as you acquired it." This shows, says Zaydan, that the Muslims did not like to connect the Caliphate with diplomacy and astuteness, and believed that the Omayyads had degraded Islam from religion to chauvinism and militarism, and thence to pure royalty.* Though strenuous effort was made, at the time of both the Omayyads and the Abbasids, to make the Caliphate hereditary, the idea never struck root among the people. Traditions were forged to support it, but with no result.† It was against the spirit of the age and the temper of the people.

We have the most clear and convincing proof of this in the fact that of the fourteen rulers of the Omayyad dynasty only four had their sons as successors. Similarly of the first twenty-four rulers of the House of Abbas only six had their sons as successors. The old Arabian idea of seniority lay in constant conflict with the natural zeal of the father to hand down the sovereignty to the son.‡ Many individual cases prove the tenacity of the old Arabian right of election and the deep root that it had taken

* Zaydan, p. 250.

† Suyuti, "Tarikh-ul-Khulafa," Jarrett's translation, pp. 12, 13; De Goeje, "Frag. Hist. Arab.," vol. i., p. 216.

‡ Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichte des Orients," vol. i., p. 385; Müller, "Islam im Morgen und Abendland," vol. i., p. 209; Von Kremer, "Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen," p. 409.

among the people. Abdul Malik proposed the election and homage of his two sons by a plebiscite of the whole nation. To the governors of the provinces he issued orders to bring the whole weight of their official influence to bear upon and conquer any opposition to it. In obedience to the Caliph's command the governor of Mekka summoned the people together, but one of the most influential jurists of his age, Sa'id ibn Musyab, peremptorily declined to elect a successor during the lifetime of a reigning sovereign. By threat and ill-treatment the governor sought to intimidate him, but Sa'id held fast to his proposition. The matter was reported to Abdul Malik who censured the conduct of the governor and wrote back: "Either you should immediately have beheaded the man or let him alone." The latter course was adopted and the old man was worried no more. The rule of succession was never settled or well-defined, but the history of the Caliphate unmistakably proves that election by the people or nomination of a successor by the reigning sovereign, confirmed by the homage of the people, was regarded as the only valid title to the throne. We will not enter here into the details of the fraud by which Saffah outwitted the Alide claimant to the Caliphate; nor shall we discuss the ruthless policy of massacre and extermination of the Alides deliberately inaugurated and successfully carried out by Mansur. We shall here cite one instance of the sacredness attached to the oath of allegiance and homage to the sovereign-elect. The first thing that the Caliph Hadi did on his accession to the Caliphate was to cancel the succession of

32 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

Harun ur-Rashid and to transfer it to Ja'far, his son. Yahya ibn Khalid, alluding to this incident, told Hadi : "Commander of the Faithful, if you encourage people to violate their oaths, perjury will be thought lightly of by them ; whereas if you let them abide by their allegiance to your brother and proclaim Ja'far as his successor, the sanctity of the oath of allegiance will be maintained."*

Election and homage were looked upon as a sacred tie linking the sovereign to the people. Once the election was effected and homage done, the relation between the sovereign and the people was complete. An election was likened to an unseverable chain binding the electors to the sovereign-elect, and thus we find a very common saying : "Election lies heavy on my neck." It involved certain rights and certain duties, upon the faithful fulfilment of which depended the continuity of the relation. Even in this we cannot fail to find the traces of the relation of the tribal chiefs with the members of the tribe. We possess an address ascribed to Yazid III., and this document, which cannot be overestimated, indicates the thoroughly democratic idea which the Arabs entertained of the position of the Commander of the Faithful. Against his cousin Walid II., the debauchee and squanderer, Yazid had organized an insurrection. He fell upon him in his country place and killed him. Alluding to this he said in his inaugural address : "By God ! I have risen against him not for the gratification of any ambition or any worldly desire or any craving for sovereignty. I say this not out of

* Zydan, p. 192

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY 33

vanity, for a sinner indeed am I, if God sheweth not compassion on me. I took up arms purely out of zeal for God and His religion. I invited men to come back to the path of God and His revelation, to the sayings of the Prophet, since the ordinances of religion had been forgotten, traces of truth effaced, and the light of revelation quenched. Let it be publicly and openly avowed that Walid was a self-willed tyrant who considered permissible things that were forbidden, and indulged in every form of heresy ; for he believed not in either the Day of Judgment or the Qur'an, though he was my cousin and kinsman. When I considered this I turned to God for counsel, and begged of Him to give no other helper than Himself, and prayed for His assistance. Many of His pious worshippers accordingly listened and hearkened unto me. I marched against the tyrant, and God delivered His people from his violence, not by any power of mine, but through His own grace. O people! I pledge myself to erect no buildings, to excavate no fresh canals, to build no palace, to hoard up no riches, to enrich neither wife nor child. From me is due to you your annuity year by year, and provisions, month by month, so that prosperity among Muslims may increase, and those who live far away may participate in it, just as well as those living near. Should I keep my promise you are in duty bound to listen to me, and cheerfully obey me, to support and protect me. If, on the other hand, I do not keep my word, you are free to depose me ; only you should give me timely warning ; and were I to improve, then accept my apology. Should you,

34 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

however, know a man of tried temper, who willingly offers you what I have offered, choose then such an one, and if you so desire, I shall be the first to do him homage and render him obedience. O people! you are aware that no man is to be obeyed when he commands an act that is sinful. This is my address to you, and I pray God for forgiveness for myself and you.”*

We might recall here the speech of Da’ud ibn Ali, which is quite pertinent to the point we are making. When the Abbasid cause triumphed and their Caliphate was secured, Da’ud ibn Ali (the uncle of Saffah) addressed the people thus : “ We pledge our word in the name of God the most High and the Prophet and Al-Abbas, that we shall rule you in accordance with the ordinances of God and shall act towards you in accordance with the book of God and treat the high and the low as did the Prophet.”†

It is obvious from these two speeches that the Arabs did not consider their ruler as a person who could not be questioned or taken to task for his action. In fact, it is apparent that as against their homage and obedience they expected certain corresponding duties which the ruler was bound to fulfil. He was, so to speak, a steward responsible for his stewardship, and liable to dismissal for neglect or omission of his duties. Such seems to be the idea—shall we say the theoretical idea--entertained by the people, of the Caliph and his position. In theory, at all events, this

* Mas’udi, vol. v., p. 458 (the Author’s translation of Von Kremer in the *Journal of the Muslim Institute*, pp. 213, 214, January-April Number, 1907).

† Ibn Athir, vol. v., p. 317 (Tornberg’s edition).

notion of the position of the Caliph continued unaltered, and instances are not wanting when the pious and the God-fearing did not shrink from warning or rebuking the Caliph for acting unjustly or failing to come up to the standard of excellence expected of him. In this connection it will be interesting to quote here the reply of Sufyan Thauri on the occasion of an invitation to Baghdad by Harun-ur-Rashid to promote him and do him honour. Thus replied Sufyan: "I write to tell thee that I break off all ties with thee and renounce thy love, and that thou hast rendered me a witness against thee in that thou hast in thy letter confessed against thyself that thou hast pounced on the treasury of the Muslims and expended what was therein where it was not due, and sent it to such as had no right to it; and not content with what thou didst at a distance from me, thou didst even write to me to make a witness against thyself; and such witness do I now bear, as do all my brethren such as saw thy letter, and on the morrow we shall present our witness against thee before God the just Judge. O, Harun! hast thou verily pounced upon the treasury of the Muslims without their leave? Hast thou for this the assent of those whose hearts are united, and those that are set in authority thereover in God's earth, and those that fight in God's path, and the son of the road? Hast thou the assent of them that carry the Qur'an in their minds and the men of knowledge? Hast thou the assent of the widows and the orphans or of any class of thy subjects?"*

* Damiri, vol. ii., p. 188; apud Zaydan, p. 255.

36 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The religious character of the Caliphate ends with the first four Caliphs. It was then a purely religious office held by men who had staked all that was dear to them for the cause of Islam. They led the community at the prayers, distributed the poor-tax, performed other religious duties, and only incidentally, as trustees and custodians of the faithful, administered the Empire which was the maturity and consummation of an eventful history. Even when in the full tide of brilliant victories they never forgot their mission or neglected their duties. Such an apostolic succession, however, was not expected to continue for any length of time, and the change from a religious to political sovereignty was a matter of natural necessity. But the religious duties and the religious character of the Caliphate, though occasionally obscured and blurred, were never wholly lost. The appearances were always kept up even in the worst days of Omayyad lust and licence. The religious aspect of the Caliphate, however, comes into greater and greater prominence during the declining years of the Abbasid dynasty, gaining greater and greater strength in proportion to the loss of political authority. The Omayyads, with the sole exception of Omar II., were, and remained, Pagans at heart. They were the fiercest opponents of the Prophet, and only made their submission to Islam for motives either of gain or fear of loss. Numerous companions of the Prophet, *epigoni*, devotees, they killed in cold blood, and with a view to bringing contempt on the cause of Ali and his party they started the practice of cursing Ali from the pulpit and issued orders that every person on pain of death

should curse him. The first person executed for not complying with this order was Hujr ibn Adi the Kindite in the time of Muawiah. The practice continued to the days of Omar II., who abolished it. They openly defied the precepts of Islam, and in the lively pages of Von Kremer we have a most graphic picture of the licence and excesses at the court of Damascus. Of such monstrous brood of vipers we shall not be surprised to learn that the "Omayyad drunkard" Al-Walid ibn Yazid, when mad with drink, shot arrows at the Qur'an. There is a story that one night he looked for a *Sors* in the Qur'an and opened the book at the words : "They asked for a decision. And disappointment shall overtake every rebellious tyrant, behind whom is hell, where he shall be given to drink of pus." He ordered the Qur'an to be hung up, and took a bow and arrows and began to shoot at it till it was all torn to pieces. He then composed the following epigram :—

"Thou taunted the rebel and tyrant ? Ah well,
A tyrant am I, and prepared to rebel.
When thou meetest thy Lord on the last judgment morn
Then cry unto God, 'By Walid I was torn.'"^{*}

There was not a shred of religious feeling or religious sentiment among the Omayyads. By tyranny and oppression they had set their subjects against them, and by their lawlessness and irreligion gave offence to the pious. Khurasan—the headquarters of the Alides and the centre of disaffection—took the lead in putting an end to their authority and in transferring it to the Abbasids. As regards the

^{*} Zaydan, p. 101; Al-Fakhri, i. 159.

38 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

Omayyads it is to be noted that they never rested their claim to the Caliphate on any ground other than that of force. They had obtained it by force and fraud, and with these two weapons they kept it as long as they could. Their rule was that of the Arab aristocracy with all its virtues and vices. Arabs to the core, they could believe in no source of authority other than that of election and homage. To it they firmly clung, and the speech of Yazid III., quoted above, is the best evidence of the temper of the times. The Abbasid Caliph stood, in contrast to the Omayyad king, as a religious chief who was not only the head of an hierarchy but the hierarch himself; the ruler not of the state but of the state church also. He was surrounded with theocratic nimbus and passed off as the Imam. In the spiritual affairs of the community he looked upon himself as the successor of the Prophet, and as such, as the holder of an office established by God. While the Omayyads considered the sceptre and the seal as the insignia of their royal power, the Abbasids added to these the mantle of the Prophet* which he is said to have given to Ka'b ibn Zuhair as a token of honour for his *Banat Su'ad*. This mantle the Abbasids wore when they first received the homage of their subjects and on all serious or festive occasions, but chiefly when they led the community at prayers. On important state ceremonials they appeared covered in this holy relic, and on special state occasions when it could not be used, they had it lying before them. Very different was the case with the Omayyads. Yazid ibn Walid did not

* De Goeje, p. 208.

consider it improper to appear even at the 'Id prayer in full military costume.* The Abbasids put religion under contribution with a view to secure their position with the people, and it is singular, indeed, how in process of time the Abbasids secured for themselves a respect and veneration which almost bordered on divinity. Long before the destruction of the Caliphate by Moguls—an institution hallowed by the faith of many generations—would it have perished had it not been for the theocratic nimbus which encircled the monarchical sceptre. People spoke of the “light of the Caliphate,” even of the “light of prophecy” which illuminated the brow of the Caliph; while for the Caliphs of the patriarchal epoch the epithet of the “best of the Quraish” sufficed. Abu Bakr would not even consent to adopting that title, but the Abbasids allowed themselves to be addressed with a title which heretofore was only applied to the Prophet, “the best of human beings.” The Abbasid Caliphs prided themselves on being God-appointed rulers on earth. Even as late as the eighth century of the A.H., the mock Caliph in Egypt, tolerated and maintained by the Mamluks, is addressed in a document as the representative of God on earth (*Naib ullah fi ardhibili*).† With the extension of the Muslim Empire grew the difficulty of effectively ruling the provinces from the central authority at Baghdad. But this was not all—the religious enthusiasm that had united the Arab tribes into one great whole was soon lost, and the more the

* Goldziher, vol. ii., p. 53.

† *Ibid.*, p. 63.

40 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

foreign peoples entered as converts into the bosom of Islam the more the Caliphate lost its national Arab character. The influx of foreign nations—with their conflicting habits and traditions—awoke mutual rivalries and jealousies, and called into being the feeling of nationality which, henceforward, became powerfully effective. The feeling of nationality, indeed, proved stronger than the tie of a common faith, and made the first breach in the proud edifice of the Caliphate. The Persians in the east, the Berbers in the west, who had been impatient of the yoke, soon succeeded in getting rid of it and founding independent dynasties. The strength of the Caliphate hitherto rested upon the national feeling of the Arabs, but when this lost its original force and vitality, and the Caliph sought the assistance of hired mercenaries—heedless of the cause in which their lances were hurled—the splendour of the throne and the sceptre rapidly disappeared. Weakness of the central authority, extension of the Empire over large and widely separated tracts of countries, want of effective control, growth of the national feeling among foreign converts, all contributed, indeed, to reduce the Caliphate to the shadow of a shade. It became the fallen ruin of ancient magnificence. The time was ripe for the governors to assert their independence and found dynasties of their own. The bold and the adventurous availed themselves of these favourable conditions for the furtherance of their interest. Persian and Turkish dynasties sprang up in the bosom of the Caliphate,* and of such were these :

* Zaydan, pp. 240-242.

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY 41

THE PERSIAN DYNASTIES.

<i>Dynasty.</i>	<i>Province.</i>	<i>Duration.</i>	<i>Founder.</i>
Tahirides	Khurasan	205-259	Tahir ibn-ul Hassan.
Saffarides	Fars	254-290	Yaqub ibn al Laith.
Samanides	Transoxiana	261-389	Nasr ibn Ahmed.
Sajides	Adherbijan	266-348	Abu'saj.
Ziyarides	Jurjan	316-434	Mardawiyj ibn Ziyar.

THE TURKISH PRINCIPALITIES.

Tulunid	Egypt	254-292	Ahmed ibn Tulun.
Ilekid	Turkistan	320-560	Abdul Karim Satuk.
Ikhshidi	Egypt	323-358	Mohammed al Ikhshid.
Ghaznevid	{ Afghanistan and India }	351-582	Alptakin.

Besides these there were other dynasties to which it is not necessary to refer here.

From the fair realms of the Caliphate these knightly adventurers carved out their fortunes, but remarkable, indeed, it is that, though the Caliph was unable to protect himself or his Empire, none of these felt themselves secure in the possession of their power until armed with a letter of acknowledgment from the Caliph. All, without exception, craved for and obtained confirmations of their authority from the pinchbeck successors of Saffah.

During the last decades of the Caliphate nothing was left to the Caliph of his extensive regal powers except the privileges of having his name engraved on the coin and mentioned from the pulpit. Coin and Khutbah (Al Sikkah wal Khutbah) became a watchword and a byword for ridiculous formalities and meaningless splendour.* But puppet as the Caliph alternately was in the hands of the Persians, the Turks, and the Kurds, his person was hedged round

* Al-Faklri, p. 38.

with a halo of sanctity which, in spite of repeated murders of Caliphs, was never wholly lost till the sack of Baghdad and the murder of the last of the Abbasids by Hulagu Khan—the godless Mongol. In this connection we might refer to a passage in the *Jama'i-ul Tawarikh* of Rashid ud-din : "Before setting out for Baghdad Hulagu took counsel with the chief noblemen of his kingdom and his principal courtiers. Every one advised according to his light and leading. Ilusam ud-din, the astronomer of the Khan, was asked to fix a favourable time for setting out for Baghdad. The astronomer, emboldened by his residence at the Court, formally pronounced unpropitious an enterprise which had for its aim an attack on the family of the Caliph and assault upon the city of Baghdad. In fact he said up to this time every king who has dared to march against Baghdad and the descendants of Abbas has maintained neither his throne nor his life. 'If the prince,' he added, 'refuses to listen to my advice and persists in his design, six serious misfortunes will be the result: (1) All the horses will die and the soldiers will be attacked with serious diseases; (2) the sun will not rise; (3) the rain will not fall; (4) violent winds will blow; (5) lands will no longer produce plants; (6) the great monarch will die in the course of the year.' On the other hand the *Bakhshis* (the Lamas) protested that an expedition against Baghdad was a perfectly legitimate expedition. Hulagu then sent for Nasir ud-din Tusi and asked his advice. Nasir ud-din, frightened and thinking that they wanted to test (his loyalty) replied : 'Of all the misfortunes

prophesied none will come to pass.' He further said: 'Hulagu will be installed in the palace of the Caliph.' They then sent for Husam ud-din in order that he might discuss the matter with the *Khajah* who added: 'According to unanimous traditions of the Muslims several of the principal Companions of the Prophet died in defending their religion, and yet no disaster or misfortune took place. If it is asserted that a special prerogative attaches to the Caliph, my reply is that Tahir started from Khurasan, under orders from Mamun, and killed Amin, brother of Mamun. Mutawakkil, in concert with the Amirs, was killed by his own son. Muntasir and Motazz were murdered by the Amirs and the pages. Several other Caliphs were killed without any disorder or irregularity in the natural course of things taking place.'^{**} This passage unequivocally demonstrates the feeling of awe and veneration entertained by the people towards the Caliph.

Thus do the facts stand in broad outline. Now let us proceed to the consideration of the theories evolved by Muslim jurists. Just as we find traces of Roman law in Muslim jurisprudence, so do we find unmistakable impress of Greek philosophy and political science in their speculations. It is undoubted that under the Abbasids Greek philosophy was studied in Arabic versions, and the Greek works, or at least some of them, were familiar enough to the Arabs. Thanks to Prof. Dieterici we now possess in print the model state of Al-Farabi, which is more or less an imitation of Plato's "Republic." Whether Al-Farabi had an opportunity

* Paris edition, pp. 261-263.

44 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

of studying the Greek original is, perhaps, doubtful; but it is certain enough that he must have received some knowledge of Plato and Aristotle through the celebrated Christian savant Abu'l-Bashar Matta, whose Arabic version of some of the writings of Aristotle has come down to us, and under whom Al-Farabi studied philosophy. Besides having Abu'l-Bashar Matta as his master, Al-Farabi studied Logic under John, a Christian physician at Harran; and it is recorded that in a short time Al-Farabi excelled the best disciples of John.* But of the writers who have written on political science, as we understand it, we might mention Mawardi, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Jam'a, Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Tabataba. Of these perhaps the most important is Mawardi, whose "Ahkam us-Sultania" (*Jus Sultanicum*), divided into twenty chapters, we possess in print.† He delivered lectures on jurisprudence for many years at Baghdad and Basra. Though offered the Kadiship of several towns he refused, and was induced, only for a short time, to accept the chief Kadiship of Ustuwa in the neighbourhood of Nishapur. He died on May 27, 1058. Ibn Jam'a is a much later writer. He was born A.H. 639 (A.D. 1238), and died A.H. 773 (A.D. 1371). Mawardi divides the whole nation into two classes: the first embracing all those who possessed electoral powers, and the other those who laid a claim to sovereignty. Mawardi discusses the subject from a purely theoretical point of view, disregarding the actual political situation

* He died in A.H. 839 (A.D. 950). "Nouvelle Biographie Universelle," s.v. "Al-Farabius"; Qifti, "Tarikh-ul-Hukama," edited by Lippert, p. 45.

† Wüstenfeld, "Der Imam El Schafii," p. 265.

of the times. He considers the Caliphate an elective sovereignty, and lays down the necessary qualifications both for the electors as well as the candidates to the throne. Among the conditions, Mawardi, says Von Kremer, omits two which have been added by later jurists; for instance by Kadhi Baidhawi in his *Anwar Ta'wil*, and by Ghazzali in his *Ihya ul-Ulum* (vol. i., p. 147): full manhood, or as we should say maturity, and the male sex.*

As a natural outcome of the conception of elective sovereignty Mawardi regards the relation between the sovereign and the nation as a bilateral compact (*Iqd*); in other words he imposes certain duties and obligations on the sovereign as a consideration for the homage and obedience of the people. Philosophers from the earliest times have been divided upon the question of the origin of law and government. While one school found the origin of law and government in compulsion, the other found it in agreement. Both schools are of high antiquity and have been represented by many eminent names. One gathers from Plato that divers sophists maintained the former thesis. It is in substance not far from that assigned to Thrasymachus in the "Republic," where the sophist says that justice is nothing but the advantage of the stronger, and in later times Hobbes and Bentham are eminent among those who embrace it. The other view is most familiar to moderns from the writings of Rousseau.†

That Mawardi should have taken such a liberal

* The Author's translation, p. 228.

† Bryce, "Studies in History and Jurisprudence," vol. ii. pp. 1, 2.

46 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

and comprehensive view of politics is the most convincing proof of the high culture and civilization of the Arabs. Such ideas can only strike root and thrive among highly advanced nations.

The Arab jurists, along with election, recognized another mode of transmission of sovereignty—viz., by the direction of the ruler himself when he nominated his successor. This view rested upon the historical precedents of the first Caliphs when such cases occurred. It was further conceded that the reigning Caliph could nominate two or three successors to follow one after another. Thus Harun appointed his three sons Amin, Mamun, and Mutamin to succeed to the Caliphate one after another. We need scarcely emphasize the apparent opposition between the two methods of transmission of sovereignty—viz., elective sovereignty and transmission of sovereignty by royal disposition. Elective franchise was due to the old Arabian custom of election to the tribal chieftainship by different tribes. The transmission of sovereignty by testamentary disposition, on the other hand, owed its origin to the too frequent instances of such transmission of sovereignty both among the first Caliphs as also among the Omayyads and Abbassides. But even when the reigning sovereign had appointed a successor, this arrangement had invariably to be confirmed by general election and homage; and no Caliph, appointing his son or kinsman as his successor, omitted to obtain the general homage by which popular approval was secured, and supreme consecration obtained.*

* The Author's translation of Von Kremer, p. 224.

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY 47

The jurists of later times tell us of a third mode of acquiring sovereignty—viz., election by force (*Al-ba'ah al-Qahiriyyah*). By this they understood cases of sovereignty assumed by force, as happened in times of an interregnum or anarchy, when no universally and lawfully acknowledged sovereign ruled, and a bold party-leader violently took possession of the throne and the army without election and homage of the people, or testamentary disposition either, and called upon the Muslim community to do obedience to him to avert anarchy or civil war. It did not matter in the least, says Ibn Jam'a, if this ruler was unlettered, unjust or vicious. But if another usurper rose against him and deprived him of his government, the victor was to be regarded as the rightful sovereign.* It is obvious from this that people had grown wiser by experience. They had learnt to take account of actual facts, and found it best to accept them. The Muslim jurisprudence, in its final stage, gave an unconditional assent to the right of the stronger.

These were then the three modes, utterly opposed to each other, in which, according to Muslim jurists, sovereignty could be acquired. All these, indeed, were generalizations from facts only too familiar to Muslim publicists. We shall now hear what Ibn Hazm has to say on the subject: "The Sunnis, the Murjiah, the Shias and the Khawarij are all agreed as to the necessity of an *Imam* and as to the necessity of obedience to him on the part of the nation. To this the only exception is the *Najdah*

* Ibn Jam'a, "Tahrir-ul-Ahkam," pp. 7, 8 (apud Von Kremer).

48 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

sect of the *Khawarij* who deny the necessity of an *Imam* and hold that men should act justly among themselves. The opinion of this sect is worthless. Enough refutation of their argument is that all the sects we have mentioned are unanimous in holding them to be in error. Both the Qur'an and the traditions inculcate the necessity of an *Imam*. For instance God says: 'Obey ye God, and obey ye the apostle and those in authority among you.' Many traditions, moreover, tell us of the obedience to the *Imam*, and the necessity of an *Imam*. . . . We know intuitively, moreover, that it is impossible for the people to execute the ordinances of God as regards property, delicts, murder, marriage, divorce, etc., to check the wrong-doer and to do justice to the wronged and oppressed, to inflict punishment, and so on, without the help of an *Imam*. Without an *Imam* none will undertake these duties; for one person or a company of men might desire a certain person to rule over them, while another person or company of men would not desire that he should rule over them, either because their judgment leads them to a different conclusion or simply from a spirit of opposition. This must necessarily happen, and it may be witnessed in countries that have no chief; where no right is secured or punishment (to the wrong-doer) dealt out, so much so that religion is nearly lost in most of such countries. Religion cannot be properly safe-guarded unless its cause is entrusted to one or more persons. Now, there are two courses open, that is, to have one or two or more persons as *Imams* at the same time. But to have two

or more persons is open to all the objections already set out. Therefore the only way in which order can be established and maintained is to entrust affairs to a single man who should be virtuous, learned, a good administrator, and possessing sufficient strength to see that the laws are carried out. But even if he were not as we have said, oppression and neglect of the law by one person, to be sure, is less harmful than by two or more. . . . Again, those who accept the necessity of an *Imam* are agreed that it is not admissible that there should be two *Imams* in the world at one and the same time, and that only one *Imam* is it proper to have. Exceptions (to this general unanimity) are Mohammed ibn Karram al-Sijistani and Abu Sabah al-Samarqandi and their followers, who sanction the existence of two *Imams* or more at one and the same time. Their defence is the saying of the Ansar who told the Muhajirin on the day of the As-Saqifah : 'A ruler from us and a ruler from you.' They also cite the cases of Ali and Hasan in their relation to Muawiah.* The Arabs had learnt the benefits of an ordered government, and it is for this reason that we find in their works augmented emphasis laid upon the necessity of a government, even though it be despotic or tyrannical. Tartushi, a Spanish jurist, says that an unjust monarchy for forty years is preferable to an hour of anarchy.†

* Ibn Hazm, "Milal Wa Nihal," vol. iv., p. 87 *et seq.*; see the interesting paper of Wellhausen, "Ein Gemeinwesen ohne Obrigkeit."

+ Von Kremer, vol. i., p. 19; Goldziher, voi. ii., p. 93; Ibn Khaldun, "Prolég.," p. 8, note 2; *ibid.*, pp. 321, 322; Zydan, p. 127.

50 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The more political parties were gradually formed, the greater grew the diversity of opinion on vital questions of politics; the first and foremost among these was, indeed, the doctrine of election and succession to the throne. The party which adopted the convenient theory of letting matters stand as they were was always the most numerous. This party assumed the name of the party of the Sunnah.* They were always ready to accept accomplished facts, and to recognize that Caliph as the legally elected one who had been chosen by the most influential persons in the capital. In opposition to these stood the strict legitimists who only recognized Ali's descendants as entitled to the Caliphate; while the Kharijites, as representatives of democratic ideas, appeared on the scene as fanatical puritans who defended the most opposite views.† They maintained that every Muslim, provided he was pious and God-fearing, even though a peasant or a Nabatean, could be elected as Caliph of the Islamic community; and the most advanced party of the Kharijites even went the length of asserting that a sovereign or a Caliph was not necessary. In a learned spirit the conservative majority, as against these extreme views, sought to establish their principles, and early, indeed, did questions relating to the title to the Caliphate, sovereignty, and succession to the throne become subjects of polemical discourse. As against the extremists, both of the democratic Kharijites and

* See Goldziher, vol. ii., pp. 92, 98, Al-zuhri.

† "Die Charidschiten," p. 7; Von Kremer, "Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen," p. 360; see further Farazdaq, Boucher's edition, p. 203 *et seq.*; Z.D.M.G., vol. xiii., p. 805.

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY 51

the legitimists (Shi'itos), the orthodox set up the doctrine that in such matters the highest authority rested with the community as a whole. In one of the oldest religio-political tracts (*Kitabul Luma*) it is expressly stated that it is not permissible to hold that the entire community could commit an error of judgment.

But modern jurisprudence understands by sovereign authority the person or body to whose directions the law attributes force, the person in whom resides, as of right, the ultimate power either of laying down general rules, or of issuing isolated rules or commands whose authority is that of the law itself.* Judged from this point of view the Muslim sovereignty was undoubtedly defective, the sovereign possessing no right or power to interfere with or alter or modify the Muslim law. Nor could the Muslim jurists take such a comprehensive view of sovereignty as is taken by European jurists, accustomed as they are to limited monarchy or pure democracy. The Muslim sovereignty was unlimited in one way and absolutely fettered in another, inasmuch as interference with Muslim law would have been equivalent to a defiance of the law of God. But if it was narrow and confined in this respect it was far too wide and extensive in other ways. The power of the Muslim sovereign ranged over not merely temporal affairs of the State, but also matters religious and social. He had to protect religion from heresies and innovations just as much as he had to defend the frontiers from foreign inroads and incursions. Here lay the strength as well as the

* Brvec. vol. ii., p. 51.

52 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

weakness of the Muslim sovereignty. It was religion which prolonged the existence of the Caliphate till 1258, and it was religion again which hopelessly placed limitations and reservations on the powers which a beneficent monarchy might have exercised over the people by assisting the current of progress unimpeded by the fetters forged by religion and modifying and harmonizing the laws with advancing civilization.

The union of religion and politics, beneficial as it is at the earliest stage of national existence, tends, as the national outlook is widened and the national horizon enlarged, to stunt progress and stereotype society. One of the greatest of modern political thinkers, Walter Baghot, has most admirably described the situation, and it will not be out of place to hear him at this point: "How to get the obedience of men is a hard problem; what you do with that obedience is less critical. To gain that obedience, the primary condition is the identity, not the union but the sameness, of what we now call Church and State. Dr. Arnold, fresh from the study of Greek thought and Roman history, used to preach that this identity was the great cure for the misguided modern world. But he spoke to ears filled with other thoughts, and they hardly knew his meaning, much less heeded it. But though the teaching was wrong for the modern age to which it was applied, it was excellent for the old world, from which it was learnt. What is there requisite is a single government—call it Church or State as you like—regulating the whole of human life. No division of power is then endur-

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY 53

able without danger, probably without destruction ; the priest must not teach one thing and the King another ; King must be priest and prophet King ; the two must say the same, because they are the same. The idea of difference between spiritual penalties and legal penalties must never be awakened. Indeed, early Greek thought or early Roman thought would never have comprehended it. There was a kind of rough public opinion, and there were rough, very rough, hands which acted upon it. We now talk of political penalties, and ecclesiastical prohibition, and social censure, but they were all one then.”*

With the Caliphate the distinction was never made between religion and politics. In Islam, theoretically, at all events, the two functions of the sovereign and the priest were inextricably interwoven with each other. Never was an attempt made to sever the two. Nor can any attempt be ever successfully made, as religion and politics are indissolubly bound up with each other. The Muslim sovereign has always been, and is to this day regarded as the representative of the Prophet, if not the vicar of God. The institution of the Caliphate was the direct outcome of the religious teachings of Islam. The doctrine of the unity of God enforced the unity of man, and thus with the new religion a community of the faithful was formed and a divinely sanctioned government established, designed to gather all men into its bosom and to fight unto destruction the Paganism of the outer world. Here, as opposed to the theory of the

* Bagehot, “Physics and Politics,” pp. 16, 17.

54 ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

mediæval empire, the priest and the King were merged in one person, viz., in the Caliph.

Different was the case with the theory of the mediæval empire, where under the emblem of the soul and body was the relation of the Papal and Imperial power presented to us throughout the Middle Ages. The Pope, as God's vicar in matters spiritual, was to lead men to eternal life ; the Emperor, as vicar in matters temporal, had so to control them in their dealings with one another that they might be able to pursue undisturbed the spiritual life and thereby attain the supreme and common end of everlasting happiness. The functions of the Emperor were twofold : to make the Christian people obedient to the priesthood and to execute priestly decrees upon heretics and sinners ; abroad to propagate the faith among the heathen, not sparing to use carnal weapons.* The duties of the mediæval Emperor, like those of the Caliph, were eminently religious, but unlike the Caliph, he stood under the spiritual control, nay, the spiritual terrors, of an earthly religious potentate—the Pope. But the Caliph, on the other hand, though independent of a spiritual chief (being himself the spiritual head of the Muslim community), holding his powers as he did, by the title of election, was, in theory at least, responsible to the nation. This, to my mind, appears the most significant distinction between the position of the Caliph and the mediæval Emperor. We cannot enter here into a fuller and more exhaustive comparison of the two theories, but it is a subject which might profitably be studied and discussed.

* Bryce, "Holy Roman Empire," pp. 108, 104.

To pass to the institution of the Caliphate. Whatever it became under the Omayyads and the Abbasids, its early career was a drama of sustained interest and equable and majestic evolution. Under the Patriarchal Caliphs it shed its consolations and extended its protection alike to the rich and the poor, the serf and the slave. But, in spite of its faults and failings, even under the Omayyads and the Abbasids, it can proudly claim the merit of having covered the whole range of its conquests with noble institutions of learning, broad capitals, marts of commerce, noble roads, and spacious harbours. Even when sunk in deep decay and surrounded by the ruins and wreckage of its glorious days, it stood as an institution commanding the universal homage of the Muslim world. When in 1258 the sun of the Caliphate went down in thunder and storm and streams of innocent blood, the link which connected the institution with the Prophet of Arabia was rent asunder—never to be joined again. Thus passed away the most venerable institution of Islam, leaving behind it the most enduring monuments of arts, learning, architecture, and the still more enduring memory of its scientific achievements, and military triumphs enshrined in the pages of history.

III

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM; ITS ORIGIN, ITS GROWTH AND ITS RESULTS

I

THE history of a nation, apart from the history of its social and political movements, would only illuminate a few yards of the glimmering pathway of humanity, leaving the large tracts of human thoughts and aspirations, slowly maturing to bloom, neglected and unrevealed. Without it, history indeed would degenerate into arid annals or a lifeless compilation. Our conception of history, therefore, is no longer that of a panorama of battlefields, or successful campaigns, or humiliating retreats. We have a more exalted conception of history and its province. We regard it as the quintessence of national thoughts and national aspirations, linking one age to another in one compact and homogeneous whole. Whatever may be the differences and divergencies, certain broad features stand out in bold outlines, common to all nations and to all ages. In every nation at a certain stage of its national existence the emancipated intellect has asserted its rights and privileges, has dreamt dreams of liberty

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 57

and fraternity, and has made an effort to shake off the tutelage or to remove the obstacles that lay in the path of its progress. Among the progressive nations of the world the intellect has triumphed in its efforts; while with others the movement has either been prematurely smothered or stifled, or, on account of unfavourable circumstances, has died a natural death. Such has specially been the case with the East, where religion and tyranny have always conspired together to keep the mind and the intellect in a degrading subservience. We propose to discuss, in this essay, the history of that interesting movement in Islam known as the Shu'ubiyyah movement, and consider the causes which led to its origin, its growth, and finally to estimate its results upon the Islamic Government. Its importance in the history of Islam can scarcely be exaggerated, as it was one of the few potent factors which smote the Arab supremacy through and through, and which sowed the seeds of disloyalty and disaffection, bearing their fruits in the rise of Abu Muslim and the overthrow of the Omayyad rule. Ostensibly the Shu'ubiyyites were those foreign converts to Islam who, while advocating the excellence of their own respective nationality, refused to acknowledge the superiority of the Arabs; but the Shu'ubiyyah movement was not merely a literary warfare waged between the Arabs on the one hand and the foreign converts on the other, but a political movement having its origin and its basis in the political conditions of the times. The Muslim Empire was composed of a heterogeneous population abounding in variations of temperament,

58 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

faith, laws, habits and traditions ; a good portion of which, either from genuine conviction or sheer necessity, had accepted Islam. Though Islam had placed these converts on a footing of absolute equality with the Arabs, they yet, to their cost, found that the Islamic teachings of equality and brotherhood were more 'a counsel of perfection' than a precept to be followed and observed by the House of Omayyah. This large and ever-growing population lay prostrate under the feet of a tyrannous government, and silently resented the imperious dictation and supercilious haughtiness of their rulers. Their hearts bled at the miseries of the time, and their blood boiled at its injustice. The history of this movement, therefore, is the history of a long estrangement and mutual distrust between the Arab Imperialism symbolized in the Omayyad government and the foreign converts to Islam, who were ever and anon striving for the recognition of their rights as Muslims and for direct participation in the State polities as fellow-citizens.

When Mohamed stamped out the Arab heathenism and with it hushed into silence the tribal feuds and jealousies, he proclaimed the brotherhood of all Muslims irrespective of rank and birth. The doctrine of equality of all Muslims so positively preached by the Prophet and so nobly upheld by his two immediate successors was quite foreign and distasteful to the Arab aristocrats, the custodians of Arab heathenism, even after the triumph of Islam, but so long as the Prophet lived and his two successors reigned they were kept well within bounds, and the doctrine of the equality of all Muslims was not only an academic

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 59

proposition but a literal truth. With the accession of Othman things changed, and changed for the worse. The Arab aristocrats apportioned among themselves the most lucrative governorships and the most profitable government posts. For the rule of Islam was substituted the rule of Arab aristocracy, and the contrast between the two—owing to the sudden change—was only too apparent and glaring. Instead of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and Omar, men of candid gaze, of fearless heart, of deep compassion, and infinite concern, the Islamic world had at its head the weak but well-meaning Othman, wanting alike in strength of character and firmness of resolve, and unwittingly playing into the hands of his formidable kinsmen. Hence the conspiracy against him and his subsequent tragic death. It is scarcely necessary for me to go into that deeply stained page of Muslim history dealing with the Caliphate of Ali and his sanctimonious son, and the final triumph of Muawiah, the governor of Syria. With the rise of Muawiah fresh problems pressed for solution. The rapid conquests of Islam had widened the ever-growing circle of new converts. Were these to be accorded perfect equality with Arab Muslims as conceded by Islam and its first two Caliphs ? The Arab aristocracy, freed from the shackles imposed by the Prophet and his two immediate successors, and, in fact, in possession of the supreme powers of the State, could not for a moment endure or tolerate such a levelling doctrine of equality. For them it was an inconceivable proposition and an astounding claim which called for equality between the free-born of the pure Arab race and a foreigner,

60 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

an Ajami. Filled with the ideals of Paganism which set a value on birth and descent, inconceivable by the moderns, they would not hear of any such concession, but held fast to their notions of exalted superiority, and looked down with contempt upon the newly enlisted band of Muslim converts. If such was the unbending attitude of the Arab aristocracy, let us now look generally into the position of the foreign converts to Islam. They had not only great wealth at their command, but in consequence of their many-sided activities—literary, scientific and professional—they had early secured an undoubtedly important position in Muslim society which, in spite of the contempt in which they were held, did not fail to cause uneasiness to Muawiah and to make the Caliph Abdul Malik sigh for the future of the Arabs. The existence of such a feeling between the rulers and the ruled was not likely to create sympathy in the one or confidence in the other, and throughout the Omayyad dynasty we notice the gulf widening more and more and estrangement growing deeper and deeper between the two classes. In the consciousness of military strength the Omayyads forgot that no government could continue for any length of time which rested solely on military support; for “force in one sense is always on the side of the governed, and government in a sense is always dependent upon opinion.”* A striking illustration of this statement of Hume does the history of the Omayyads offer. The constant quarrels of the North and the South Arabian tribes; the opposition of the pictist party to the ungodlike and unrighteous govern-

* Hume.

ment of the House of Omayyah ; the frequent risings of the Kharijites, bitterly hostile to the ruling dynasty ; added to these the silent yet powerful discontent of the foreign converts who alternately cast in their lot with the pietists, the Kharijites, the Murji'ites and every insurgent who held out hopes to them—all these combined and conspired indeed to shake the Omayyad rule to its foundation and pave the way for the success of Abu Muslim and the ascendancy of the House of Abbas. The fall of the Omayyads brought better days for the oppressed and the despised converts. The Abbasids, thoroughly imbued with foreign and specially Persian influences, showed a distinct partiality towards the Persians at the expense of the Arabs. Persian fashion, Persian costume, and Persian court etiquette became paramount at the court and in society, and we hear, as it were, a note of discontent in the contemporary literature of the Arabs against this inroad of foreign influences. Compared with the Omayyads the Abbasids represented a policy of toleration which does them credit. The national Arab government, however, perished and perished for evermore. The Abbasids, within almost half a century, became mere ornamental figure-heads ruled by foreigners—Persians at first, and Turks after. The Persians now took their revenge and began to assail the Arab vanity at its weakest point. They attacked their birth and descent and painted them in the darkest hue, using against them a language as uncomplimentary as the Arabs, under the Omayyads, were wont to apply towards them. A more conciliatory policy towards the

62 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

subject races would not only have added strength to the purely Arab national government (for such was the Omayyad government) but would have saved it from its premature fall. But the policy of the Omayyads had a yet more disastrous effect. To it we must mainly ascribe the reaction against Arabism, which set in under the Abbasids in all its fierce bitterness. It further rent Islam in twain and emphasized the difference between the "Arab" and "Ajam" and thereby undid one of the greatest achievements of Islam—the unity and brotherhood of all Muslims. We now proceed to a fuller and a more detailed consideration of the subject.

II

Islam was a democracy and a perfect brotherhood. Conversion to Islam, according to the teachings of the Prophet, meant an unqualified admission to the theocracy set up by it, and full participation in its rights and privileges, and an absolute extinction of all differences based upon race, nationality, or colour. "Truly the most worthy of honour in the sight of God," says the Qur'an, "is he who feareth Him most; for the faithful are brethren; wherefore make peace between your brethren." In a similar strain did the Prophet express himself in his parting sermon: "O men, God has taken away from you the arrogance and pride of ancestry of heathen days. An Arab has no other excellence or superiority over a barbarian than what is secured to him by his god-

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 63

fearing and righteousness."* Again the Prophet said : " After my death beware of becoming heathens afresh and slaying each other." † The same refrain we find in the following traditions which, whether genuine or apocryphal, express the real spirit of the teachings of the Prophet : O man, of a truth God is one God, and the ancestor of all mankind is one ; the religion is the same religion, the Arabic speech is neither father nor mother to any one of you, it is naught else but a speech. He who speaks Arabic is thereby an Arab.

He of [the people of] Pars who accepts Islam is as good as a Quraishite.

Did faith reside in the Pleiades, yet would men of this people [the Persians] reach it—a tradition modified as follows : Were knowledge suspended to the ends of heaven yet would a section of the people in Pars reach it. ‡

The instances of Bilal the Abyssinian, and Salman the Persian, clearly demonstrate that the Prophet of Arabia never made any distinction between Muslims, whatever was their nationality. The pious Abu Bakr, similarly, made no distinction between Arabs and non-Arabs, slaves and freedmen, so long as they were Muslims. He distributed the State income among all Muslims: men, women, children, freedmen and clients, § and Von Kremer

* Von Kremer, "Culturgeschicht. Streifzüge," p. 22; my translation, pp. 80, 81.

† Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichte des Orients," p. 543, vol. i.

‡ Goldziher, "Muh. Studien," vol. i., pp. 116, 117; Professor Browne, vol. i., p. 264.

§ Abu Yusuf; *apud* Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichte des Orients," vol. i., p. 86, note 1.

64 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

(on p. 69, vol. i. of his invaluable "Culturgeschichte des Orients") specially draws attention to the fact that the second Caliph effaced all distinctions between the full-blooded Arabs (Sarih), the half Arab (Halif), and client (Mawla), in assigning annuities. This was quite in keeping with the declaration of his policy which he made in his inaugural address as Caliph. There, among other things, did he say: "By God ! the weakest among you will appear to me as the strongest until I have secured his rights to him, and the strongest among you will I treat as the weakest until he conforms to law."* Omar treated all Muslims alike, irrespective of their nationality or social position. To an Arab governor who, while refusing them to the clients, granted annuities to the Arabs, he issued the following laconic order: "It is reckoned as wicked in a man to despise his brother Muslim." Even to non-Arab converts did Omar assign annuities, to various Persian landowners in Mesopotamia, and to a quondam Christian of Hirah. As for foreign converts and their clients he recommended his commanders of troop to treat them on exactly the same footing as Muslims (*i.e.*, Arab Muslims), in whose rights and responsibilities they were to share. He even suggested that they should form a special tribe of their own and receive annuities according to the very same principle which applied to the Arab tribes. Such examples and precepts, however, were not commendable to the aristocratic Arabs, the upholders of the Arab national pride, and the founders of the Arab Imperialism. If the democratic principles of

* Weil, "Geschichte der Chalifen," vol. i., pp. 54, 55.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 65

Islam had been applied to the neo-converts, the brotherhood of Islam would have been an accomplished fact; but the entire Islamic system was opposed to the Arab frame of mind. Nor was this unexpected. In the first place, says Professor Nicholson, the fundamental principle of Islam was foreign and unintelligible to the Bedouins. It was not the destruction of their idols that they opposed so much as the spirit of devotion which it was sought to implant in them; the determination of their whole lives by the thought of God and His pre-ordaining and retributive omnipotence, the prayers and fasts, the renouncement of coveted pleasures, and the sacrifice of money and property which was demanded of them in God's name. In spite of the saying, "La Dina illa bil-muruwwati" ("There is no religion without virtue"), the Bedouin who accepted Islam had to unlearn the greater part of his unwritten moral code. As a pious Muslim he must return good for evil, forgive his enemy, and find balm for his wounded feelings in the assurance of being admitted into Paradise. Again, the social organization of the heathen Arabs was based on the tribe, whereas that of Islam rested on the equality and fraternity of all believers. The religious bond cancelled all distinctions of rank and pedigree; it did away, theoretically, with clannish feuds, contests for honour, pride of race—things that lay at the very root of Arabian chivalry.* The Arabs gloried in the purity of their descent and the nobility of their ancestors; and the title of Ibn Hurratin, the

* Professor Nicholson, "Lit. Hist. of the Arabs," p. 178.

66 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

son of a free mother, was considered, after as before Islam, as a title of special pride and glory.* They believed that only the son of a free-born Arab could protect the honour of the tribe and bring help to the suffering and the oppressed, as also carry out the duties and obligations of the Muruwwa (the old virtue). Thus does the poet Tarafa say :

وَقَرِبْتُ بِالْقُرْبَى وَجَدْكَ إِنْهَى
مَتَى يَكُنْ أَمْرُ الْنَّكِيْثَةِ اشْهَدَ
وَإِنْ أُدْعَ فِي الْجَلْبِ أَكْنَ مِنْ حُمَّادَتَهَا
وَانْ يَا تَكَ الْأَعْدَادِ بِالْجَهْدِ اجْهَدَ

“ I sought approach to you by the common tie of relationship, and by your good fortune, O Malik, I do present myself to help you when an affair demanding serious efforts presents itself.

“ And if I am called on by you in any serious affair, I will be amongst the defenders of your honour, and if the enemy comes to you, striving for your destruction, I will strive in repulsing him.” †

And with noble pride for the services rendered to his tribe does Imru ul-Qais ‡ sing :—

وَقِرْبَةِ أَقْوَامٍ جَعَلْتُ عَصَامَهَا * عَلَى كَاهِلٍ مَتَى ذَلَوِيلٍ مَرَحَّلٍ

“ And many a leather water-bag of the people I have placed its strap over my shoulder, submissive and repeatedly saddled with it.”

* Goldziher, vol. i., p. 122.

† Arnold's edition of the " Moallaqat," p. 89.

‡ Arnold, p. 22.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 67

Among the Arabs the feeling of kinship and the duties which it involved were regarded as almost sacred, and, therefore, they thought that none but a full tribesman could satisfactorily discharge those duties. It was considered as an indelible stain upon a tribe which counted a female slave as its ancestress. "Inna ummakum amatun" ("Your mother is a female slave"), thus does a poet attack the Banu Nujayh of the tribe of Darim; and according to Ibn Abd Rabbih (Iqd., iii. 296) the hajin, i.e., the son of an Ajamiya or non-Arab woman, did not inherit in the times of ignorance. Even the brave and chivalrous Antara did not escape the reproach of descent from a negress, and, as a protest against the Arab pride, he composed some of his finest verses :—

إِنْ أَنْكَرْتُ فَرْسَانَ عَبْسٍ نَسْبَتِي * فَسَنَانٌ رَمْحٌ وَالْحَسَامُ يُقْرَلٌ

And again :—

أَذْ كَنْتَ عَبْدًا وَدَنْيَا فِي التَّسَبِ
فَالسَّيْفُ يَكْسِبُنِي فَخَارًا وَحَسْبٍ
سَيْفٌ إِذَا جَرَدَّهُ يَوْمَ الْغَضْبِ
ذَلَّتْ لَهُ اعْنَاقُ سَادَاتِ الْعَرَبِ *

Though the children of an Arab by a slave-girl or freed-woman were looked upon as legitimate, yet the aristocratic Arabs would not treat them as their equals in rank and position. Many Arabs were so proud of their descent from their father's and mother's side that they refused to believe that anybody could

* "Z.D.M.G.," vol. ii., pp. 190, 192.

68 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

equal them. This is expressly related, says Goldziher, of Ukail ibn Alafa, the poet of the Banu Murra.* In this connection we might recall the immortal lines of Tarafa:—

وَإِن يُلْتَقَ الْحَمْيُّ الْجَمِيعُ تَلَاقِنِي
إِلَى ذُرَوَةِ الْبَيْتِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُصَمِّدِ

The Caliph Hisham told Zaid ibn Ali ibn Husain : “ It has come to my knowledge that you are coveting the Caliphate and that you are very anxious to secure it, but you are not the man for it inasmuch as you are the son of a slave-girl.”† Born and bred in an atmosphere of the most narrow conservatism, the ruling Arabs were not likely to treat foreign converts as their equals. This was a demand—though repeatedly made by the neo-converts and the pious and the God-fearing Arabs for them—which the ruling race could not for a moment entertain, being opposed to the inherited notions of racial pride. Were the conquerors and the conquered to be on the same level and the same footing? Were they to stand on the same platform and shake hands with each other as brothers and equals? The Arabs peremptorily declined to concede any such privileges to the neo-converts. Here the Arab Imperialism and the Islamic theocracy stood in an irreconcilable hostility to each other. The ruling Arabs would not yield and the Muslim converts would not unhesitatingly submit to the artificial barriers created by their rulers; nor could

* Goldziher, vol. i., p. 131.

† De Goeje, “Frag. Hist. Arab.,” vol. i., p. 98.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 69

they silently tolerate the invidious distinctions and the sneering contempt of the governing power. A collision between the ruling Arabs and the subject races was inevitable, and when it did come, the Arab Imperialism could not resist its overwhelming tide. The crash of accumulated wrongs fell upon the Omayyads, and with a weight which destroyed them root and branch.

The misunderstanding between the Arabs and the Neo-Muslims contributed largely to the incessant insurrections and rebellions against the government which took place in Iraq and gave so much trouble to the Omayyad Caliphs that they had to send so energetic a Governor as Hajjaj to restore peace and establish authority. The Omayyads' was a purely national government and their entire policy bears its impress.

It was in pursuance of this policy that Abdul Malik introduced Arabic coinage in general use, for hitherto Roman and Persian coins circulated in the Muslim Empire,* and had the government accounts, hitherto kept in Greek in Damascus, and in Persian in Kufah, transferred into the Arabic language. Arabicizing, says Professor Wellhausen, started, it seems (according to Beladhuri, p. 300 : *Fihrist*, 242), from Kufah. Zadan Farukh ibn Piri or his son Mardan Shah was the last Persian accountant. His assistant, Salih ibn Abdur Rahman, offered to keep the accounts in Arabic for Hajjaj, and he managed to do so even though it gave him some trouble to

* Wellhausen, "Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz," pp. 135-137.

70 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

express the fractions—numerical figures were not employed in Kufah. The Greek accounts in Damascus were transferred into Arabic by Sulaiman ibn Sa'id. The Greek and Persian systems, however, were maintained; only the language was changed, and the foreigners continued to be as indispensable to the government as ever, for the Arabs were deficient in technical knowledge and clerical training.

We now pass on to consider the position of the Mawali (the clients) in the Muslim society and their relation towards the ruling power.

III

The Arab tribal system was founded upon unity of blood, upon real or feigned kinship, and as such, in theory at least, held by itself and refused aliens a permanent settlement in its midst; but as a matter of fact, each individual tribe had a number of freedmen and refugees within its circle, who were incorporated into it, either by affiliation or adoption. The weaker tribes, for purposes of safety and protection, largely resorted to affiliations and adoptions, and “the adoption of individual protégés to full tribesmanship must in late times have been very common, for *Hilf* and *Da'i*, sworn ally and adopted son, are often taken as synonymous terms.”* In the earliest times Mawla simply meant a kinsman, and even in the Qur'an *Mawalikum* (33, v,) is used as a synonym for *Ikhwanukum*. But we gradually notice a distinction

* Robertson Smith, “Kinship and Marriage in Arabia,” pp. 54, 55.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 71

made between *Mawla-l-wilada*, i.e., a kinsman by birth, and *Mawla-l-yamin*, a kinsman by oath; a distinction further deepened when Mawla (one admitted into the tribe by affiliation) was used in contradistinction to Samim or Sarib (a full-blooded member of the tribe). This distinction, however, was only observed in the matter of blood-money; for the blood-money for the death of a dependent was not so high as for a Sarib; otherwise protector and protected shared the risks and benefits of the blood-feud; the protector was bound to avenge his halif's blood, and he himself or any of his people was liable to be slain in the halif's quarrel, as the latter was in the quarrel of his protector. Further, in Medina at least, the sworn ally had a claim on the inheritance of his protector.

The rule obtaining with regard to it is expressed by the Arabs: *Alwala luhma ka-luhmat al nasab* or *al wala nasab thabit*, i.e., clientship creates strong kinship. Again, *Maula-l-Qaum minhum* or *min Anfusihim*, i.e., the Mawla of a tribe is to be regarded just as one of its original members.* It is obvious, therefore, that in the earliest times the word Mawla was not exclusively applied, as it was later on, to foreign converts to Islam or non-Arabian clients.

With the unceasing conquests of Islam, foreign converts streamed into Arabia, in larger and larger numbers, and formed a part of the Arab nation. They were not the sworn allies, the hulafa, but captives of war who escaped slavery by conversion to Islam, and thus acquired the status of clients. The clients, after the conquest, therefore, were non-Arabs

* Goldziher, vol. i., p. 117.

72 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

since Arabs might not be enslaved. The Omayyads, however, applied the term to all non-Arab Muslims, and called clients all Muslims of Persian nationality, who having been Magians and members of a tolerated sect, had embraced Islam, as well as all such persons as had attached themselves to the Arabs or had taken refuge with them. They used to call them the "Red Party," a word which the native lexicographers say is equivalent to non-Arab.* Their rank was steadily swelled with the hundreds and thousands of white and black slaves sent as presents to the Caliph or at times in lieu of land-tax.† Even as early as the time of Muawiah these clients had become sufficiently numerous to make that clear-sighted statesman uneasy as to their future. He accordingly desired to massacre them all or partially, but before taking such an extreme step he consulted some of the chief statesmen in whom he reposed trust and confidence, such as Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais and Samurah ibn Jundub. He told them that he found this "Red Race"—*i.e.*, the clients—were ousting the earlier Muslims, and he was in hourly dread of an assault by them on the Arabs and the supreme power. "I suggest, then," he said, "that I should kill a large portion of them, leaving the remainder to maintain the market and keep up the roads. What do you think?" Al-Ahnaf would not approve of such a course, but Samurah agreed with the Caliph and even volunteered to carry out himself the massacre of the clients. Muawiah, however, adopted the advice of the former and desisted.

* Zaydan, "Umayyads and Abbasids," p. 52.

† *Ibid.*, 113.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 73

Muawiah anticipated the difficulties which the racial question would bring in its train, and his forebodings were realized, and only too soon. At the commencement of Islam, says Zaydan, the Arabs occupied themselves only with governing and politics; all other occupations, especially arts and crafts, were relinquished by them to non-Arabs. One of their proverbs places folly with weavers, spinners, and teachers, these being trades pursued by members of tolerated creeds.* The Arabs, intoxicated with victory, cared little for anything except poetry and history, and to these also they devoted such scant attention that they were soon outstripped by the foreigners, the despised clients. Moreover, their want of acquaintance with calculation and clerical work rendered them unfit for the public offices which, in spite of the Omayyad chauvinism, were mostly held by members of tolerated creeds and clients. Not only in the government are the foreigners always to the front, says Goldziher, but we find them also in the foremost ranks in the specifically religious sciences. It almost seems, says Von Kremer, that these scientific studies (reading and exegesis of the Qur'an, sciences of tradition and law) were during the first two centuries [of the Hijra] principally carried on by clients [Mawali, i.e., non-Arab Muslims]; while the Arabs proper felt themselves more drawn to the study of their ancient poetry, and to the development and imitation of the same; but, we would add, even in this field they were often outstripped by the foreigners.

* Zaydan, "Umayyads and Abbasids," p. 71.

74 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

men of learning in no small degree advanced this sphere of the Arabian genius by literary and historical studies on the antiquities of the Arabs, by thorough critical researches and so forth. It would be superfluous to cite here the many names whereof the mere sound affords proof of what Arabic grammar and lexicology owe to non-Arabs; and even if we cannot permit Paul de Lagarde's assertion that "of the Mohamedans who have achieved anything in science, not one was a Semite," to pass in this absolute form, yet so much at least may be said that alike in the specially religious studies as in those which grew up round the study of the Arabic speech, the Arabian element lagged far behind the non-Arabian. And this was principally the fault of the Arabs themselves. They looked down with sovereign contempt on the studies so zealously prosecuted by the non-Arabs, considering that such trivialities were unworthy of men who could boast of so proud an ancestry, and befit only the pedagogue anxious to gloss over with such pigments his dingy genealogy. It befits not the Quraishite—in such words a full-blooded Arab expresses himself—to go deeply into any study save that of the old histories of the Arabs, especially now, when one has to handle the bow and attack the enemy. Once a Quraishite, observing an Arab child studying the Book of Sibawaiyh, could not refrain from exclaiming: "Fie upon thee! That is the learning of schoolmasters and the pride of beggars!" For it was reckoned as a jest that anyone who was a grammarian, prosodist, accountant or jurist (for the science last mentioned arithmetic is

indispensable) would give instruction in these subjects to little children for sixty dirhams (for what length of time is not unfortunately mentioned).*

The greatest of the Arab historians has come to the same conclusion as Dr. Goldziher, and it is interesting to hear him : "The first Muslims were entirely ignorant of art and science, all their attention being devoted to the ordinances of the Qur'an which they carried in their breasts and to the practice (*sunna*) of the Prophet. At that time the Arabs knew nothing of the way by which learning is taught, of the art of composing books, and of the means whereby knowledge is registered. Those, however, who could repeat the Qur'an and relate the traditions of the Prophet were called 'readers' (*Qurra*). The oral transmission continued until the time of Harun al-Rashid, when the need of securing the traditions against corruption or of preventing their total loss caused them to be set down in writing ; and in order to distinguish the genuine traditions from the spurious, every *Isnad* (chain of witnesses) was carefully scrutinized. Meanwhile, the purity of the Arabic tongue had become impaired ; hence arose the science of grammar ; and the rapid development of law and divinity brought it about that other sciences, e.g., logic and dialectic, were professionally cultivated in the great cities of the Muslim Empire. The inhabitants of these cities were chiefly Persians, freedmen and tradesmen, who had long been accustomed to the arts of civilization. Accordingly the most eminent

* Goldziher, vol. i., p. 119 ; Von Kremer, "Culturgesch. Streifzüge," p. 16 ; my translation, p. 72.

76 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

of the early grammarians, traditionists and scholastic theologians, as well as of those learned in the principles of law and in the interpretation of the Qur'an, were Persians by race or education, and the saying of the Prophet was verified: 'If knowledge were attached to the ends of the sky, some amongst the Persians would have reached it.' Amidst all this intellectual activity the Arabs, who had recently emerged from a nomadic life, found the exercise of military and administrative command too engrossing to give them leisure for literary avocations which have always been disdained by a ruling caste. They left such studies to the Persians and the mixed race (Al-muwalladun) which sprang from intermarriage of the conquerors with the conquered. They did not entirely look down upon the men of learning, but recognized their services, since after all it was Islam and the sciences connected with Islam that profited thereby.* The Arabs, as a nation, loved to live up to the ideals of Paganism, caring little for scientific and literary pursuits; but we do not thereby suggest that they altogether neglected such studies. The intellectual history of Islam can point to many genuine Arabs of the type of Al-Mu'arrij (d. A.H. 195), of the tribe of Sadus, who has said: "I came from the desert and I knew nothing of the rules of the Arabic language. My knowledge was merely instinctive, and for the first time did I learn its rules in the

* Ibn Khaldun, "Muqaddima" (Beyrut, 1900), p. 543 *et seq.*
Apud Professor Nicholson, "Literary History of the Arabs,"
p. 278.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 77

college of Abu Zaid al-Ansari al-Basri." But the Arab, says Goldziher, had completely to change his very nature and recast it in the mould of a foreign culture before he could take up theoretical sciences as subjects of his study.* By wealth and learning the Mawali made their power felt in Muslim society, though the ruling Arabs would not hold them as their equals and peers. The conversation between Abdul Malik and Zuhri, happily preserved and handed down to us, illustrates the position acquired by the Mawali even as early as the time of Abdul Malik. Ibn Sahl relates in his travels that Al-Zuhri, the famous theologian, happening to be once at the court of the Caliph, introduced himself to the Commander of the Faithful. The following conversation took place between the ruler and the savant.

CALIPH : Whence dost thou come ?

ZUHRI : From Mekka.

CALIPH : Who exercised authority over the people at the time of thy residence there ?

ZUHRI : 'Ata, son of Rabah.

CALIPH : Is he an Arab or a Mawla ?

ZUHRI : A Mawla.

CALIPH : How did he succeed in obtaining this influence over the Mekkans ?

ZUHRI : By his piety and knowledge of the traditions.

CALIPH : Just so ; distinction among men comes to the godfearing and the learned in the traditions. Well, now, who stands in prominence in Yaman ?

* Goldziher, vol. i., p. 122.

78 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

ZUHRI : Ta'us, son of Kaisan.

CALIPH : Is he an Arab or a Mawla ?

ZUHRI : A Mawla.

CALIPH : How has he attained this influence ?

ZUHRI : By the very same qualities as 'Ata.

Thus did the Caliph question him about all the provinces of Islam and was informed by Zuhri that in Egypt, Yazid b. Abi Habib ; in Syria, Makhul the son of a captive of war from Kabul to whom a Hudhailite, in whose service he was, had granted his freedom ; in Mesopotamia, Maimun B. Mehran : in Khurasan, Al-Dhahhak ; in Basrah, Al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ; in Kufa, Ibrahim An-Nakhai ; all these were pure Mawali, who played the rôle of leaders in Muslim society. When the Caliph expressed his astonishment at this state of affairs, which would inevitably lead to the Mawali wresting the rule from the Arabs and making the latter their subjects, Zuhri said : " So it is, O Commander of the Faithful ! This is effected by the command of God and His religion ; he who observes these, attains to authority ; he who neglects them, goes under."* It is related of Muslim ibn Yasar, a Mawla, that no one in his time was more respected than he.† These clients distinguished themselves as Huffaz (persons who knew the Qur'an by heart), commentators, lexicographers, poets and scholars, and as such they gained a considerable influence with the people as well as the pietist party—not quite a negligible

* Khuda Bukhsh, " Islamic Civilization " and the authorities therein cited, p. 27.

† Ibn Qutaibah, p. 121. He died A.H. 100.

factor in early Muslim politics. To the Mawali belonged most of the intellectual men who adorn the literary history of Islam, and we need scarcely cite more than a few instances here. Mohamed Ibn Ishaq, author of the "Life of the Prophet," was the grandson of one of those forty, named Yasar.

To the clients, moreover, belonged such men as Abu Safar, of the captives of Daba in the time of Abu Bakr; Hammad, the reciter of poetry whose father was a Dailemite by birth, of the captives taken by Mukhnif, son of Zaid of the Horses; Sa'ib Khathir, by origin of the captives taken when Persia was conquered; the poet Marwan, son of Abu Hafsat, descended from a Jew taken captive at Istakhar; the grammarian Al-Harawi, originally a prisoner who fell into the lot of some Bedouin Arabs; Ibn al-Arab, originally of Seinde; Abu Dulamah, a black slave at Kufah to an Arab of the Banu Asad who manumitted him.* We might indefinitely multiply this list, but it is enough to show that the clients had early enough made a mark in the world of letters and had secured a position of considerable weight in the Muslim community which the Arab Government could not altogether ignore. They had acquired importance not only in the world of letters, but were indispensable to Government as clerks in offices and as traders and artisans. Besides these there were fighting clients. To each Arab tribe there were attached a number of these, often more numerous than the tribe itself. When the tribe went fighting, they went out with it and fought

* Zaydan, p. 54.

80 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

for it. The proportion between clients and patrons varied at different times. In Ali's time the number of clients who went to war was to the number of citizens as one to five; in the Omayyad period, owing to the steady growth of the numbers of the clients, they became more numerous still.* We come across a statement in the history of the first expedition to Khurasan, according to which the Muslim army that crossed the Oxus and besieged Saghanian, counted 5,000 strong, of which one-fifth were Persians who had accepted Islam and had made common cause with the Arabs.† Abu Mikhnaf states that in the camp at Dair Jamajim along with 100,000 Arab military pensioners (*muqatila*) there were as many *Mawali*.‡ Certain it is, as Von Kremer points out, that the majority of the converts in Syria, Egypt, Africa, as well as Iraq, Persia and Transoxiana chose military service and entered the army. To this class belonged Tariq whose name Gibraltar still bears, and Musa ibn Nusair, conqueror of the Maghrib and Spain. Though conspicuous in every walk of life, in learning, in trade and in war, the *Mawali* were refused political rights and social privileges which they as Muslims should have enjoyed. Though Muslims they were not only not exempted from the hateful capitation-tax paid originally by non-Muslims, but were exposed to the ever-increasing exactations of government officials. The Omayyads might justify their conduct against the

* Zydan, p. 114.

† Beladnuri, 407. *Apud* Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichte des Orients," vol. i., p. 232.

‡ Wellhausen, "Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz," p. 153.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 81

Shi'ites and the Kharijites who were ever and anon trying to undermine the basis of their rule, but no such justification could be pleaded or urged against the peaceful Mawali. We read in the "Iqd Ibn Abd Rabbih" the following passage which is evidently taken from the work of Jahidh on clients: Nafi ibn Jubair allowed a client to lead the prayer; for this he was reproached, but he replied: "I only wished to demean myself before God by performing my prayer behind a client." This Nafi used to ask whenever a funeral passed by his house who the dead person was. If the answer was that he was of the Quraish he called out: "Oh, what a loss to his tribe!" If the dead person was only an Arab, he said: "Oh, what a loss to his home!" If the dead person happened to be a client he said: "One of the herd of God who takes whatever He wishes and leaves whatever He wills." People used to say: Three things, if they happen to pass before the person praying, cancel prayer; these are a donkey, a dog, and a client. Further, clients were never addressed by kunyas (*i.e.*, father of so and so) but simply by their names or nicknames. Nor would Arabs walk in their midst nor let them go ahead of them in festive processions. If they came to dinner, they had to sit behind the Arabs. If a client was entertained on account of his age or his piety or his learning, he had to sit apart so that no one could mistake him for a genuine Arab. Moreover, a client was not allowed to perform the funeral prayer over a deceased Muslim if an Arab was present, however distinguished the client might be. If anybody wanted to marry the daughter

of a client he had to make the proposal not to the father or the mother of the girl but to the patron of the client ; and the patron either gave or withheld his consent as he pleased. If, on the contrary, the father or the mother of the girl gave her in marriage, it was considered absolutely null and void even if the marriage had been consummated. The status thus created was looked upon merely as that of concubinage and not of lawful wedlock. The Mawali, moreover, were excluded from all important religious posts such as the judgeship, the maxim being that only Arabs were qualified to be judges. The office of Caliph was, further, closed to the son of a slave-girl even though his father was a Quraishite. In A.H. 101, for the first time, the son of a slave-girl, Yazid son of Al-Walid, ascended the throne. The Umayyads forbade marriages between clients and Arab women, and the famous Abdullah Ibn 'Aun, being a client, was beaten with scourges by Bilal ibn Abi Burdah for marrying an Arab woman. There is a long poem of Abu Bujail condemning a member of the tribe of Abd Qais in Bahrain for marrying his daughter to a client. The whole tribe is reproached for allying itself with tradesmen and cultivators.* It is obvious how little inclined the aristocratic Arabs were to allow absolute equality to recent converts. The genuine Arab considered himself infinitely higher and nobler than either the recent Persian or Syrian converts.† Here was a situation full of danger. But it was not only the

* Zaydan, p. 118.

† My translation of "Culturgeschichtl. Streifzüge," pp. 79, 80.

Mawali whom the Omayyads had to face and overcome; the Arabs themselves were by no means disposed favourably towards them. Besides the contempt in which they were held, the Mawali had other serious grievances against their rulers. When they served in the army they fought on foot and not on horseback; and when they distinguished themselves they were regarded with distrust. They got pay and a share in the booty (even this excited the wrath of the Arabs), but no regular annuities; nor were they enrolled in the army pension register. Nothing, says the historian Tabari, in speaking of the revolt of Mukhtar, so exasperated the [Arab] Kufans as to see Mukhtar assign to the clients their share of the spoil. "You have taken from us our clients," they cried, "who are the spoil which God hath destined for us with all this province. We have liberated them, hoping for a reward from God, but you do not trouble yourself about this, and cause them to share in our booty." Although admitted to the Arab tribes they were distinguished as "people of villages" from the "people of the tribe," and although Muslims, they were not exempt from taxes payable by subject races. The tax to which the land-owning Arabs themselves had to contribute seems not to have been felt as such a burden by the Khurasanians as by the Transoxanians, who had only joined Islam in anticipation of being exempted from this tax. But the discontent of the inhabitants of Soghd, without doubt, spread to those of Khurasan. Harith b. Suraij and others took care that this should be the case. Had the Arabs treated the

84 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

converted Iranians as equals, the amalgamation of the two nationalities might have been possible; as it was, they merely cherished them as enemies in their own bosoms. Islam did not remove but aggravated the antagonism. It regenerated the Iranians, stiffened their backs, and placed in their hands a weapon, which they could direct against their masters. Islam united them with those Arabs who, led by theocratic principles, opposed the Omayyad government. It was the Arabs who first excited and organized the Mawali. The revolutionary Islam set up the idea of the theocracy as against the existing system of government and sounded the war-cry in the name of God against the Omayyads and their officials, in the name of right and justice against injustice and oppression.* Broadly speaking, says Professor Browne, the policy of the Omayyads utterly alienated four classes of their subjects :

1. The pious Muslims, who saw with horror and detestation the sacrilegious actions, the ungodly lives, the profanity and the worldliness of their rulers. Amongst these were included nearly all the "companions" (Ashab) and the "helpers" (Ansars), and their descendants. From these elements the rebellion of Zubair derived most of its strength.

2. The "faction" (Shia) of Ali, which had suffered from the House of Omayya the irreparable wrongs culminating in the tragedy of Kerbela. This constituted the kernel of Al-Mulhtar's rebellion.

* Wellhausen, "Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz," pp. 309, 310.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 85

3. The Kharijites or Puritan theocrats who, reinforced by malcontents and freebooters of every kind, continued till about A.D. 700 to cause continual trouble of the most serious kind to the Omayyad government.

4. The clients (Mawali) or non-Arab Muslims who, far from being treated by the government as equal to their co-religionists of Arab birth, were regarded as subject races to be oppressed, exploited and despised by their rulers.*

The pietist party, the Kharijites and the Murji'ites, rejected, on principle, every distinction between Arabs and Mawali in Islam; and it is not, therefore, surprising that the Mawali alternately cast in their lot with these and were found, in large numbers, in every insurrection and rebellion that was organized against the government. The Shi'ite party was largely recruited out of their midst, and in Merv the masses of Shia consisted of Mawali. With the help and assistance and sympathy of the Arabs who stood opposed to the ruling dynasty, the Mawali lifted their heads; and in these Mawali, who were entitled by virtue of Islam to more than the dominant Arabism allowed them, the hope now dawned of freeing themselves from clientship and of rising to full and direct participation in the Muslim state.† The despised Mawali, therefore, fondly joined the party which conceded to them their legitimate rights and privileges. Even as early as the time of Muawiah,

* "Literary History of Persia," vol. i., pp. 232, 233.

† Wellhausen, "Die religiös-politischen G-positionspartheien," p. 79.

there was a Kharijite Mawali insurrection headed by Abu Ali of Kufa, a Mawla of the Banu Harith.* In the rebellions of Al-Mukhtar and Abdur-Rahman ibn Ash'ath there were Mawali in large numbers; but Wellhausen in his masterly and erudite "Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz," has conclusively shown that neither of them, as suggested by Von Kremer, was essentially a Mawali movement. It is equally certain, says he, that the insurrection of Ibn Ash'ath, like that of Mukhtar, had its real centre in Kufa.† That the Mawali took part in it does not necessarily make it a Mawali movement. They might well have had their own reasons for hostility against the Syrian Government which constituted the backbone of the Arabism, but they only played a secondary rôle. In it specially well-represented were the Yamanites of Kufah, the Kinda Hamdan and the Madhij. In Kufah they were predominant and reckoned Ibn Ash'ath as their own. They were joined by the rest of the tribes, not excluding those of Basorah. The insurrection of Ibn Ash'ath was rather a renewed and desperately violent attempt of the Iraqians to shake off the Syrian yoke. It was not a war of the Mawali against the Arabs but rather of the Iraqians against the Syrian Arabs. It was a war of the two rival provinces of the Arab Empire ever striving for supremacy.

Even the Murji'ites, the passive resisters, content, as Wellhausen puts it, "to stand up for the Impersonal Law," turned their principle of toleration

* Goldziher, vol. ii., p. 189.

† Wellhausen, "Das Arabische Reich," pp. 153, 155.

against their rulers. Thus Harith b. Suraij and other Arabian Murji'ites, joined the oppressed Mawali of Khurasan to whom the government denied those rights which they had acquired by conversion. Enough, we trust, has been said to show that the Mawali had abundant reasons to be distrustful of, and disloyal to, the Omayyad government. Things were hurrying to a crisis, and the general belief that some revolution would take place towards the end of the A.H. 100 hastened and precipitated the crisis already near at hand. The Omayyad governors of Iraq—Ziad and Hajjaj—had driven away the dangerous elements of Kufah and Basorah to Khurasan, which in process of time became the centre of discontent and the nursery of rebellions. The Mawali, here, were far more compact, and the Arabs, compared to them, far weaker. Moreover, here in Khurasan, the fusion of the Arabs and Persians was far greater, and, as its result, the sympathy between the two races far more real than elsewhere. "The Arabs in Khurasan were already to a large extent," says Wellhausen, "Persianized. They had Persian wives, wore trousers, drank wine, and kept the festivals of Nawrauz and Mehrjan, while the Persian language was understood and even spoken among them."* Thus was the position of affairs when in A.H. 101 (719-20), the Shi'ites sent deputations to the Imam Mohamed b. Ali b. Abdullah b. Abbas b. Abdullah b. Hashim to accept their allegiance. The time was ripe for change, but the Abbasid propaganda could not count upon the undivided support of the oppressed and

* Wellhausen, "Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz," p. 307.

despised Mawali who, as we have seen, espoused the cause of the rebels and insurgents who rose against the government. They had already proved their power and worth in the insurrection of Al-Mukhtar, in the conquest of Andalusia and upon a hundred battlefields. These Mawali hailed with eagerness and delight the movement which assured to them the fall of the Omayyads and the dawn of a happier and brighter era.

In all the accounts of the Abbasid movement Kufah appears as its home and hearth. Here more than half the population consisted of Mawali (clients) who had monopolized handicraft, trade, and commerce. They were mostly Persians in race and language. They had come to Kufah as prisoners of war, and had there passed over to Islam; then they were manumitted by their owners and received as clients into the Arab tribes, so that they now occupied an ambiguous position, being no longer slaves but still very dependent on their patrons, needing their protection, bound to their service, and forming their retinue in peace and war. No longer satisfied with their humble position, they were pining for their liberty and political rights. Here, in Kufah, resided Maisara, Ibn Mahan, Abu Salma, the representatives and the plenipotentiaries of the concealed Imam, as also their supporters and fellow-workers. All of these were Mawali, Iranians by nationality, and traders and artisans by profession. Some Arabs, says Professor Wellhausen, may have belonged to the party, but they did not hold a leading position. Khurasan (*i.e.*, Merv) was worked from

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 89

Kufah; and for a long time after the year A.H. 101, the canvassers there were all foreign merchants, natives of Kufah.* To the support of the Mawali was to be added the support of the Shi'ites in order to ensure complete success of the movement. The Shi'ites regarded the Omayyads as usurpers and were only too anxious to bring back the Imamāt to the house of Ali; and their support to the movement was secured by carrying on the Abbasid propaganda in the name of Hashim, the common ancestor of both the Abbasids and the Alides, and only at the last, when success was achieved, was it made clear, to the bitter disappointment of Ali's partisans, that the House of Abbas was to profit by their labours to the exclusion of the house of Ali.† Thus duped, the Shi'ites willingly played into their hands, for they not only execrated the Omayyad rule, but protested against Arabian Nationalism. Islam and not Arabism, according to their fundamental principles, conferred citizenship in the Muslim theocracy.

We are not concerned with the successive stages of this remarkable propaganda, but we cannot fail to mention here that the black standard of the Abbasids raised by Abu Muslim at the village of Sīqandanj near Merv bore the significant inscription from the Qur'an: "Permission [to fight] is accorded to those who take up arms because they have been unjustly treated."‡ This was a stroke of policy, most probably adopted with a view to gratify the Mawali,

* Wellhausen, p. 320. Professor Wellhausen considers Khidash to be the real founder of the Abbasid party in Merv.

† Browne, "Literary History of Persia," vol. i., p. 239.

‡ Browne, vol. i., p. 242.

90 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

who had been smarting under the lashes of the Omayyad tyranny and oppression. But Abu Muslim proceeded with caution, and it was not until he had secured the help of the Yamanite Arabs that he proceeded to capture and occupy the capital of Khurasan. For seven months did he wait in the neighbourhood of Merv without attempting any serious advance. The Abbasid propaganda was one triumphal procession leading up to the accession of Abdullah al-Saffah, October 30, A.D. 749. Kufah was occupied by Kahtabah in August, A.D. 749, in the same month Merwan's son was routed on the lesser Zab by Ibn Awn, and Merwan himself suffered a crushing defeat on the River Zab on January 26, A.D. 750. Damascus was taken three months later, and Merwan II., the last Caliph of the house of Omayyad, was slain on August 5 of the same year. The war against Arabism, says Professor Wellhausen, resulted in the supremacy of the Iranians and the subjection of the Arabs as a nation.* Nasr b. Sayar—the only man of loyalty and devotion to the Omayyad cause—clearly anticipated that, but his warnings fell on unwilling ears. Thus did he address the Arabs in the verses preserved by Dinaweri :†

“Tell those of Rabi'a in Merv and her brethren to rise in wrath
ere wrath shall avail nothing,
And to declare war; for verily the people have raised a war in
the skirts of which the wood is ablaze!
What ails you that ye stir up strife amongst yourselves, as
though men of sense were absent among you,

* “Das Arabische Reich,” p. 334.

† *Ibid.*, p. 322; Professor Browne's excellent translation,
p. 212.

THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM 91

And neglect an enemy who already overshadows you, a heterogeneous horde, devoid alike of religion and nobility ?
They are no Arabs of ours that we should know them, nor even decent clients if their pedigree be declared,
But a people who hold a faith whereof I never heard from the Prophet, and which the Scriptures never brought.
And should one question me as to the essence of their religion,
verily their religion is *that the Arabs should be slain !*"

With Merwan II. passed away the house of Omayyah and the Arab Imperialism. We have seen how the Omayyads offended almost all classes of their subjects ; the pietists by their ungodliness, the Mawali by their arrogance and contempt, the Arabs as a body, by taking away power from them and confining it in the narrow circle of their kinsmen and favourites. Had they secured the loyalty and devotion of the Mawali, they would have founded their empire upon a sure and permanent basis. The Mawali and the Syrians combined together would have given them strength enough to cope with any difficulty or put down any insurrection. But as matters stood the oppressed Mawali threw in their weight, whenever an occasion arose, against the government. The entire fabric of the Omayyad rule was shattered by incessant insurrections, deep-seated disaffection and growing disloyalty, and the Abbasid propaganda was but one unopposed and continuous triumph. With the house of Abbas the Arabs retire to the background, and the Iranians come to the forefront.

The political tendencies of the Abbasids were decidedly Iraqi and anti-Syrian.* At the same time the sovereignty of the Arabs, whose representa-

* Wellhausen, "Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz," pp. 347-352.

92 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

tives were the Omayyads and the Syrians, had ended. The old home and hearth of the Arabs had become such a complete waste that pilgrimages could no longer be undertaken with safety. The Arab tribes, ceasing to be the framework of Muslim theocracy, had completely lost their privileges. The Mawali were emancipated, and the distinction between Arabs and non-Arabs was effaced. Displaced from its original, exclusive position founded upon military rights, Arabism was now relegated to a peaceful and civic sphere, and became an international civilization in which all Muslims participated. The basis of this civilization was religion, but the Arab religion, no longer confined to the Arab nation, had extended far and wide. The Arabic language, however, remained the language of Islam, and absorbed the languages of the most important Christian nations of Asia Minor and Africa. In Iran it appears even to have been adopted for literary and learned purposes, but poetry preserved the native idiom and brought it afresh to a place of honour. Even the Mawali obtained not a complete but a partial preponderance over the Arabs. The Khurasanians had helped the Abbasids to victory and had shared the booty with them. They were in a certain sense the heirs and inheritors of the Syrians, even though their relation to the government was different to that of the Syrians. They styled themselves the Shia (the party), the Ansar (helpers), or the Abna (sons) of the Dawla. In their hands lay the outward power. They were militarily organized. They held the posts of commanders, and their officers (Quwad)

were privileged to play the part of great lords. They formed the standing army of the Caliph, and to him they were attached as his bodyguards. Baghdad was not laid out as a world-city, but as the camp of the Khurasanians where the Caliph, far from Kufah, desired to reside. But while in camp the Khurasanians kept up connection with their home, and the preponderance which they had gained as a party and as an army in the service of the Abbasids made itself felt among their people and in their country, in the Eastern Iran. Under the mask of International Islam, Iranism triumphed over the Arabs. With the change of dynasty even the system of government changed. It is doubtful whether Persian influence chiefly brought this about, but certain it is that it became essentially un-Arab. By conquest the Arabs stood as a ruling nobility; the genealogical network of their tribal system superficially spread over the provinces of their empire. This primitive system, in its main features, continued under the Omayyads. It soon became impracticable, however. It disappeared under the Abbasids, with the distinction of rank and position which the Abbasid government presupposed. Not like the Omayyads, the Abbasids rose upon a broad aristocracy to which they themselves belonged. The Khurasanians, on whom they relied, were not their kith and kin, but only their instruments. For them the Muslims, as a whole, were all alike without any gradation of political rights and privileges. They alone, as the heirs of the Prophet, had the right to rule and to govern. There was nothing, therefore,

94 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

to prevent them from constituting their government according to technical rules just as it suited their purpose or personal interests. They brought greater order in administration, notably in their judicial and financial systems, and showed great earnestness in removing the grievances of those who approached them as the supreme appellate tribunal. But in a much stronger manner than the Omayyads did they suppress all general and lively interest in politics which earlier formed part of religion. Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs, were mere subjects and were allowed no longer to interest themselves in public affairs. They were relegated to trade, agriculture or the peaceful cultivation of letters, and could only conspire in secret at the most. The court was the sum total of the State. The Caliph was surrounded by a motley crowd of attendants of both sexes, as also by the very numerous members of the Hashimide family. To the court belonged the army, the cream and flower of which was permanently quartered at the residence of the Caliph. In this Baghdad differed not only from Medina but also from Damascus. To the court, moreover, belonged a crowd of civil servants who were no longer identical with military officers. They were, for the most part, creatures and favourites of the ruler. Among them there was a majority of freedmen who formerly exercised private influence, but now succeeded to the highest public posts. From the dust were they raised and to the dust were they thrown back. Catastrophes and intrigues became the order of the day at the court. Distinguished men, though non-officials,

were unwillingly drawn to the court, and in choosing their wives the Abbasids no longer attached any weight to their descent. Not birth but the Caliph created the circle of the nobility. By uniforms and "Tiraz" he conferred rank and dignity—the tailors and the lacemakers had plenty to do. In the place of an aristocracy there stepped forward a court bureaucracy, graduated and controlled internally. At the head stood the Wazir, who presided over the chancery, and in later times became the ostensible *alter ego* of the invisible Caliph who only occasionally appeared as an actor on the stage or shimmered like a lightning and disappeared. More and more did the practice gain ground for the governor-elect to make over his province to his representative and to remain himself at the court; specially so if he had the advantage of being a prince of the royal blood. The subordinate officers of the chancery were mostly Christians and Jews who easily drew upon themselves the hatred and envy of the Muslim mob. Besides the Wazir the most conspicuous person in the official circle was the executioner. The Arabs knew no executioner and the Omayyads kept no such person. From the Abbasids, however, this office was inseparable. A piece of leather near the throne, which served as a scaffold, formed one of the insignia of the Caliphate; instantaneous execution coupled with the most deliberate cruelties heightened the awe and reverence for the majesty of the Caliph. For this Iran served as a model, whose Shah exercised the right of life and death over his subjects. From Iran also came the office of the court astrologer who

was questioned about every important undertaking, and even accompanied the army in the field. Finally the postmasters should be mentioned, as quite characteristic of the Abbasid government, who were the feelers of the court of Baghdad extending over the provinces, and the select confidants who had secretly to watch even the governors.* The post served as a means of espionage; the news service in the extensive empire was splendidly organized. Tabari mentions not merely the events but also the arrival of the information at the court. The new era is essentially distinguished from the old by its relation to religion. The Abbasids claimed the credit of having brought Islam to power which had been suppressed by the Omayyads. They wanted to revive, as they said, the faded traditions of the Prophet. To Baghdad they invited from Medina—their seat hitherto—men versed in the sacred laws—and constantly secured their good-will; for they had to decide political questions in juristic form, according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They used Islam in truth for their own purposes.

They tamed the divines and the theologians at their court and made them justify their most odious measures. The pious opposition in gaining the victory over the Omayyads had reached its goal and was thus rendered harmless and now could rest quiet. Politics were in good hands; the Muslims had no longer to worry themselves about them. The theocracy was realized and revolutions against the govern-

* Von Kremer, "Culturgeschichte des Orients," vol. i., p. 192 *et seq.*

ment must, therefore, cease. The Abbasids, moreover, after unceasing wars and insurrections, were favoured by the necessity for peace. The Arabs had become exhausted and had been bled to death. We might think that the Abbasids would have favoured the Shi'a party with whom they were allied; but they turned against them when they succeeded to government, and even became hostile to them in order to repel their claims to the Caliphate. An extreme Shi'ite sect, the Ravendites (specially to be found in Iran), they did not even hesitate to cast aside. In religion they turned from the Persians to the Arabs. They ceased to acknowledge their extraneous origin as soon as they had firmly planted themselves and had secured power. They conformed to the current Islam of the Jama'a, which was of an unreflective character, treated religion as a matter of custom, and were satisfied with tradition which regulated in a uniform manner the life of everyone by ritual and law.

They stood up far more vigorously for the Ijma' of the community and persecuted far more fiercely than the Omayyads any departure or innovation which imperilled religious or political unity. As heirs of the Prophet they made greater use of the Imamat than the Omayyads and wielded the temporal and spiritual powers of government. While the Omayyads relied upon nationality, the Abbasids founded their empire upon the army and the religion. We might characterize their Caliphate as Cæsaro-Papacy. They appointed an officer who attended to heresies and instituted an inquisition against the so-called Zindiq, who appear to have been the

98 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

precursors of the extreme Persian Shi'ites. Even the Khurasanians, later on, became inconvenient to the Abbasids. Mansur got rid of the guardianship of Abu Muslim when he required him no more. He was by no means a match for Abu Muslim in his great qualities, but he managed to overreach him and got him murdered. At first the Khurasanians were indispensable for military purposes, and later it was not easy to ignore or to do without them. After Harun's death an attempt was made to get rid of them with a view to consolidate and strengthen the government. The Abbasids did not succeed, however, in making themselves independent by the wholesale purchase of Berbers, Slavs, Soghdians and Turks, whom they organized and equipped in order to play them off against the Khurasanians. In the result they failed. They fell, indeed, under the tyranny of these mamluks, chiefly the Turks. They finally became powerless and their empire fell to pieces. The Iranians maintained their commanding position for a couple of centuries, but they were unable to maintain it permanently in their own country. They could not check the incursions of the Turks in Transoxiana, Tukharistan, and Khurasan, though for a time these were kept back by the Arabs. And thus, in the end, the Turks became the inheritors of the Islamic empire in which, as mamluks, they had already secured a position. To them we might even add the Mongols, who did not feel quite at home in Islam, but who, like a devastating storm, passed over it, leaving behind, in the main, no other than negative traces.

We have thought it necessary to indicate the changes which the overthrow of the Omayyads involved, and to describe the policy which the Abbasids pursued. The Abbasids, by destroying the bulwark of Arab nationality, paved the way for foreign influences which ultimately denationalized the government and demoralized the Arabs. The introduction of unbounded luxuries and the most corrupt forms of vice at the Court and among the people sapped the national vigour and vitality and made the government entirely dependent upon foreign mercenaries, who slowly yet steadily succeeded in crippling the powers of the government and in reducing the Caliph to a shadow and a phantom. The racial problem, says Lord Curzon, must always remain an anxious one, since when excited it is capable of transcending all others in explosive energy and importance. This very racial problem the Omayyads were called upon to grapple with and settle, but in dealing with this problem they shipwrecked their empire. Instead of a policy of conciliation they pursued a policy of suppression and repression, and instead of tact and sympathy they showed national venom and aggressiveness. In the Omayyad days the Shu'ubiyyah party was unable to gain the upper hand, owing, as we have seen, to the harsh and severe policy of the rulers; but when the Caliphate came into the hands of the Abbasids and when the Arab prestige was destroyed by the result of the war between Amid and Mamun, they immediately came to the front and composed works sorely wounding the vanity of the Arabs.

IV

We have noticed the changes that came over the Muslim empire with the ascendancy of the House of Abbas. Persian influence, as Von Kremer truly says, increased at the court of the Caliphs and reached its zenith under Al-Hadi, Harun ur-Rashid and Al-Mamun. Most of the ministers of the last were Persians or of Persian extraction. In Baghdad Persian fashions continued to enjoy an increasing ascendancy. The old Persian festivals of the Nawruz, Mihrjan and Ram were celebrated. Persian raiment was the official court dress, and the tall, black, conical Persian hats were already prescribed as official by the second Abbasid Caliph (in A.H. 153 = A.D. 770). At the court the customs of the Sasanian Kings were imitated, and garments decorated with golden inscriptions were introduced, which it was the exclusive privilege of the ruler to bestow. A coin of the Caliph Mutawakkil shows us this Prince actually clothed in true Persian fashion.* While under the Omayyads Ismail b. Yasar found it dangerous to boast of his Persian descent, being thrown into a tank of water by the order of the Caliph Hisham for doing so, under the Abbasids the Persians showed an open contempt for the Arabs and all that was Arabian. In this the Persians were undoubtedly encouraged by the Caliphs, for we have it that Mamun openly avowed his partiality for the Persians at the expense of the Arabs; and when reproached by an Arab for showing

* "Streifzüge," pp. 32, 33; my translation, p. 93.

greater favours to the inhabitants of Khurasan than the Arabs, the Caliph observed: "Never have I caused a Qaisite Arab to alight from his horse without his consuming my treasury to the last dirham; the South Arabians, indeed, I do not like, nor do they like me; the Quda'a Arabs again await the advent of the Sufyani* in order to join him; the Rabi'a Arabs are angry with God for not selecting a prophet out of their midst; and we never meet two of them without one being a rebel."

In the golden period of the Abbasid dynasty among the many Wazirs we scarcely find one of Arab descent. They were mostly Mawali and Persians; for instance the Wazir of the second Abbasid Caliph, Rabi'a b. Yunus, was a descendant of a certain Kysan, the client of Othman, or, according to other reports, a foundling. Already under the Caliph Abu Jafar Al-Mansur, says Goldziher, we notice how the Arab waits vainly for entrance before the Caliph's gate, while men of Khurasan freely go in and out through it and mock the rude Arabs. The poet Abu Tammam (died A.D. 845-846) was rebuked by the Wazir for comparing the Caliph to Hatim of the tribe of Tayy and other personages in whom the Arabs gloried, with the words: "Dost thou compare the Commander of the Faithful with these barbarous Arabs?"

Irano-philism was indeed traditional with the house of Abbas; and I fancy, says Goldziher, that in one of the most remarkable traditions in Bukhari the conviction of the damaging results of this tendency

* The Mahdi of the followers of the Omayyad dynasty.

of the Abbasids is intended to be expressed. Whoever is acquainted with the style of traditions, and does not allow himself to be blinded by the brilliance of the Isnad, will easily see that the theologians in the beginning of the third century of the Hijra probably intended to convey this [conviction of theirs] by making Omar, struck by the dagger of Abu Lulu, say to Abdullah, the son of Abbas, the ancestor of the Abbasids : "Praise be to God that my death has not been caused by a Muslim. Thou and thy father would like to see Medina full of barbarians (*uluj*)."^{*} This fiction is nothing more than a criticism of the circumstances which came to light during the Abbasid rule, associated with the person of the ancestor of the dynasty.*

Rich and influential Persian families sought to revive their ancient religious beliefs and practices, and in Afshin we have a most conspicuous example of the thin veneer of Islam in non-Arab circles. Though he rendered brilliant services to Islam, he still held by his own ancestral beliefs, and dreamed of the restoration of the Persian empire and of the "white religion," and ridiculed the Arabs, the Magribines, and the Muslim Turks. He likened the Arabs to dogs to whom we throw a bone in order to strike them on the head with a club. Since the Caliphate of Al-Mutawakkil the influence of the Turks became decisive on the government at Baghdad. They held the most important civil and military posts, and under Al-Musta'in things came to such

* Goldziher, "Muh. Studien," vol. i., p. 149; (compare Ibn Sa'd, "Tabaqat," vol. iii., part i., p. 258.)

a pass that the Caliph allowed them a free hand in the disposal of the State Treasury. Very great must have been the indignation among the Arabs against the preponderance of the foreign elements, and an echo of the popular feeling we hear, as it were, in a poem declaimed with applause and approval at the court of the Caliph Al-Muntasir (A.H. 247-248).

"Oh! Lady of the house in Al-Burk!—Oh! Lady of government and power!
Be afraid of God and do not kill us! for we are neither Dailam nor Turks."*

Al-Mutanabbi (fourth century of the Hijrah) felt for the decay and corruption of his nation, and has written, so to speak, an epitaph over the Arab greatness which is unsurpassed in its beauty and in its pathos :

"Men retain their worth through their ruler;
No salvation is there for the Arabs whom the barbarians rule,
Who possess neither culture nor renown, neither alliance nor loyalty.

Wheresoever thou mayst set thy foot, wilt thou find men
watched over by slaves as if they were a herd of cattle."†

The increase of foreign elements, says Goldziher (in the government), corresponded with the decline of Arabism.

* Aghani, ix. 86, 14, quoted by Goldziher, vol. i., p. 151.

"O Herrin des Hauses in Al-Burk—O Herrin der Herrschaft und der Macht
Fürchte Gott und tödte uns nicht! wir sind ja nicht Dejilem und Türken."

† *Ibid.*, p. 153.

V

Such a social and political atmosphere could not but add strength to those tendencies which the Shu'ubiyyites represented. The Shu'ubiyyites might roughly be divided into two classes, the moderate and the extremists. While the former urged the doctrine of the complete equality of the Ajam with the Arab, the latter boldly advocated the superiority of the Persians and the inferiority of the Arabs, and hence in the remains of the controversial literature that survived the overwhelming tide of orthodoxy which set in, in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Hijra, we find a fierceness of tone and temper against the Arabs and an unrestrained apotheosis of the Persian race and nationality. We do not suggest that the Persians alone took part in this, but as Professor Browne says: "Of these Shu'ubiyyah each one vaunted particularly the claims to distinction of his own nationality, whether Syrian, Nabathæan, Egyptian, Greek, Spanish or Persian; but the last named were at once the most vehement and the most numerous."*

At the time of the Abbasids, learned men, poets and scholars (of Persian origin) opposed their Iranian racial pride against the Arabs. The Persian aristocracy of this period, moreover, preserved their genealogies with as much care and zeal as did the descendants of Kahtan and Adnan, and even in the genealogy of the Arabs they were better instructed than the Arabs themselves. They could, therefore,

* Professor Browne, "Literary History of Persia," p. 266.

pick holes in their pedigrees with all the greater ease and attack them with all the greater effect. It is reported of the famous grammarian Yunus b. Habib (died A.H. 185) (whom even the Arabs of the desert visited to profit by his philological studies), that he referred with pride to his Persian descent. The orator and theologian, Mohamed b. Al-Laith (a Mawla of the Omayyad family who traced back his pedigree to Dara b. Dara), openly showed partiality to the Persians at the time of the Barmicides. It was probably on this account that the Orthodox called him a "Zindiq" though he wrote a book in refutation of this heresy. Sahl b. Harun, one of the librarians of Mamun, wrote a large number of books ventilating his hatred against the Arabs. This was the time when poets (of the Persian race), writing in the noble language of the Quraishites, could enter their protest against the self-glorification of the Arabs. At their head stands the Shu'ubiyyite poet Bashar b. Burd whose boastful poems celebrating his descent from the "Quraish of the Persians" and biting satires against the Arabs have come down to us. Almost two centuries later, we have Abu Sa'id ur-Rustami (tenth century A.D.), in whom the national cry of the Persians against the Arabs sounds its last notes.* To this class of poets belongs Ishaq b. Hasan ul-Khurrami (died A.H. 200). He refers with pride to the fact that he has come from Soghd and exultingly says that it matters not to him that he does not reckon among his ancestors Yuhabir or Jarm or 'Ukl. The poet and philologist Abu Othman Sa'id b. Humaid

* Goldziher, p. 161 *et seq.*

106 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

b. Bukhtigan (died A.H. 240) appears to have been the representative of the extreme wing of the Shu'ubiyyite poets. His father, a distinguished upholder of the Mutazil doctrine, had given suspicion of Shu'ubiyyism, but the son offered the clearest proof of it. He composed some verses ridiculing Ahmad ibn Abi Da'ud, the chief Kazi of Mutasim and Wathiq, at whose instance his father had been imprisoned :

" Thou tracest thy descent from Iyad simply because thy father happens (by chance) to be called Abu Da'ud.

If by chance he had been called Amr b. Madi thou wouldest have said thou wert descended from Zubaid or Murad."*

In the poet Dik ul-Jinn (died A.H. 235-236), a Shu'ubiyyite enthusiast, the Syrian patriotism appears to have found a special advocate. The Arabs, he says, have no precedence over us, for descent from Abraham unites us all. We are as much Muslims as they are, and if one of them kills us he is liable to capital punishment. Has God announced anywhere that they have superiority over us? The much-despised Nabathæans as well found their supporters in philosophers. The philosophers Dirar b. Amr ul-Ghatafani and Thumama b. Al Ashras (died A.H. 213) espoused their cause and urged that the Nabathæans could hold their own as against the Arabs in honour and glory. Mas'udi—to whom we owe this information—adds that even the brilliant littérateur and philosopher Al-Jahidh professed the doctrines of the Dirarites who advocated the excellence of the Nabathæans over the Arabs. But the book called the "Nabathæan Agriculture" (third century A.H.) must be

* Aghani, xvii., p. 2.

regarded as the most conspicuous document of the Nabathæan Shu'ubiyyah. Its author—Ibn Wahshiyah* — inspired by a fierce hatred against the Arabs, and full of bitterness for the contempt entertained by these against his compatriots, decided to translate and make accessible (to the people) the remains of the old Babylonian literature with a view to show that the forerunners of his people—so deeply despised by the Arabs—possessed a high culture and civilization, and surpassed, by their knowledge, many nations of antiquity. The author intended to contrast the insignificance of the old Arabs in science and culture with the performances in this direction of his own people and thereby to meet the unfounded conceit of the ruling race.

Just as in the Aramaic circle, Nabathæan Shu'ubiyyah literature grew up, so also “Books of the Copts” arose celebrating the great deeds of the old Egyptians. Thus throughout the Muslim Empire, embracing as it did many races and nationalities united by the one tie of religion, the idea of nationality got the better of religion and eventually triumphed. This, indeed, was but consistent with the slow but sure progress of humanity. Religion cannot annihilate the distinction of races, and though Islam, in its beginning, destroyed the barriers of race and colour and united its followers under the common banner of faith, it hopelessly failed to maintain its ideal ; and hence the intensity of national pride and national

* The book of “Nabathæan Agriculture,” composed in A.D. 904 by Ibn Wahshiyah, who professed to have translated it from the Chaldean, is now known to be a forgery (Professor Nicholson, “Literary History of the Arabs,” p. xxv).

tradition, of which the Shu'ubiyyite literature bears more than ample proof.

Among the most notable champions of Arab superiority we might mention the historians Ibn Qutaiba (died A.D. 883 or 889), and Al-Beladhuri (died A.D. 892), and Nasir-i-Khusraw — all, curiously enough, of Persian origin.

The Shu'ubiyyah controversy, says Professor Browne, extended itself to the regions of genealogy and philology, wherein lay the special pride of the Arabs; and as regards philology proper, Goldziher specially mentions as champions of the Arab cause the great commentator Al-Zamakhshari (also a Persian, died A.D. 1143-1144) who in his preface to the "Muffassal" thanks God for his learning in, and enthusiasm for, the Arabic language, and his exemption from Shu'ubi tendencies; Ibn Duraid (died A.D. 933); and Abu'l Husain b. Faris (early eleventh century). Amongst their most notable opponents he reckons Hamza of Isfahan who "was enthusiastic for the Persians and who shows his enthusiasm, amongst other ways, by finding Persian etymologies for names generally regarded as purely Arabic."*

We can fix the second and third centuries of the Hijra as the golden period of this party, and we find, as it were, an echo of this movement in Al-Biruni, who lived in the fourth century of the A.H., and wrote in Arabic and championed the cause of the Persian race against the idle boasts of the friends of the Arabs, particularly Ibn Qutaiba.

* "Literary History of Persia," vol. i., pp. 269, 270.

VI

It now remains for us to consider the nature of the arguments used by the Shu'ubi and the Arabs in support of their respective contention. In the "Iqd" of Ibn Abd Rabbih we have a most admirable summary of the arguments advanced by each of these parties, and as these passages are full of interest, I propose to translate them *in extenso*. *

*The contention of the Shu'ubiyyah or the Equalitarians
who hold to the doctrine of Equality.*

*Of the arguments advanced by the Shu'ubiyyah against
the Arabs.*

We hold (they say) to the principle of brotherhood and equality, and believe that all men are of the same substance, and children of one and the same man. We adduce as proof of our contention the sayings of the Prophet: "The blood of the believers shall be equally retaliated or expiated (*i.e.*, the noble shall have no advantage over the ignoble in the retaliation or expiation of blood); and if the least of them should give a promise of security to any people, the whole body of the Muslims shall be responsible for its fulfilment; and they shall be one body, and a help to each other against all others." And also his saying in his speech at the farewell pilgrimage, in which address he took leave of his followers, and put the seal on his mission (or brought it to an end). "Ye people! God has removed from you the pride

* "Iqd," vol. ii., pp. 85-90.

of the days of ignorance, and the boasting of one's ancestors. Ye are all children of Adam, and Adam is from dust. No Arab has superiority over any of the 'Ajām, except by reason of piety." These words of the Prophet are in conformity with the words of God: "Truly, the most worthy of honour in the sight of God is he who feareth Him most." You, however, do not consent to aught save boasting, and say: "They shall never be equal to us, although they professed Islam before us, and although they shall pray until they become like unto bows, and fast until they become like unto strings." But we shall act in a gentle manner towards you, and consent to discuss with you the question of the nobility of birth which your Prophet has prohibited you to boast of, but you have chosen naught save to act contrary to his injunctions. In agreeing to argue with you, we are also following his teaching and his precepts; and thus we shall refute your contention for self-glorification and say, "Let us hear what you have to say should the Ajām put this question to you: Do you consider glory to consist all in sovereignty or the prophetic office?" Should you say, in sovereignty, they might answer you in this wise. The Kings of the whole world are of our number such as the Pharaohs, the Nimrods, the Amalekites, the Chosroes, and the Cæsars. Besides, is it meet for anyone ever to have the like of the dominion of Solomon to whom were subjected men and the demons and the birds and the wind? Now, he was one of us. Or has anyone had a kingdom like that of Alexander whose power was established upon the earth, and who

reached the rising of the sun and its setting, and who built a rampart of iron with which he filled the space between the mountain-sides, and behind which he imprisoned a nation of men who surpassed the rest of the world in numbers, for God saith : " Until Yajuj and Majuj have had a way opened for them, and they shall hasten from every highland ;" nothing can point better to their large numbers than these words. Nor has any man left behind him monuments like his on the face of the earth. If he had left nothing else save the Pharos at Alexandria, the foundations of which he had laid on the bottom of the sea, and at the head of which he constructed a mirror which reflected the sea on all sides [it would have been quite sufficient]. Of us, also, are the Kings of India, one of whom wrote to Omar Ibn 'Abdul Aziz to the effect: " From the King of Kings, who is a descendant of a thousand Kings, and has as his wives the daughters of a thousand Kings, and in whose stables a thousand elephants are kept, and who has two rivers giving growth to the alas wood and madder and the nut and camphor, the fragrance of which is perceived at a distance of twelve miles—to the King of the Arabs who does not attribute to God any companion whatever. To proceed. My object in writing to you is to pray you to send me someone to teach me the faith of Islam and instruct me in its laws. Peace."

If, on the other hand, you say that there is no glory save in the prophetic office, we answer that all prophets and apostles from Adam himself have been of our nations, with the exception of four—Hud,

Salih, Ismail, and Mohamed. Of us are the chosen ones of mankind, Adam and Noah, the two stocks from which all men have branched off. We are therefore the root and you the branches; indeed, you are nothing but one of our offshoots. This being so, you may say what you list and indulge in your pretensions. And besides, there have ever been nations of the A'ajim in every part of the world, with Kings to unite them and cities to gather them together, and with laws to obey; and a philosophy they have created, and wonderful things they have invented in the way of instruments and arts, as, for instance, the art of manufacturing silk brocade, which is the most wonderful of arts, and the game of chess, which is the noblest of games, and the weight of the steel-yard by means of which a single pound or a hundred pounds can be weighed; and like the philosophy of the Greeks in their cosmogony and their law, and the astrolabe which shows the positions of the stars, and by which a knowledge of altitudes is gained, as well as the movements of heavenly bodies and of the eclipses. As for the Arabs, they have never had a King to unite the country and outlying districts in one rule, or to curb the wrongdoer and restrain the ignorant; nor have they produced any result in art, nor have they effected anything in philosophy; the only thing they can lay a claim to is poetry, the laurels of which, however, the foreigners share with them, for the Greeks have wonderful poetry, perfect in measure and rhyme. What, then, can the Arab boast of as against foreigners (*i.e.*, non-Arabs)? They simply

are ferocious wolves and savage beasts, devouring and attacking each other, so that their men are ever secured in chains of captivity, and their women taken up behind the saddle-bags of camels, and who, if overtaken by the relief party, are rescued in the evening, but after having been trampled upon like a public road. In fact, a certain poet boasted of this, saying: "Nor more trusted than I, by the women carried off on an evening." "And is it a thing to boast of, woe to thee," he was told, "to rescue them in the evening after they have been outraged and humiliated?" The poet Jarir has said, reproaching the Banu Darim for the victory of the Qais over them in the battle of Rahrahan:

"And at Rahrahan, on the morning when Ma'bad was taken in fetters, were your women wedded without dowries."

And Antarah has said, addressing his wife:

"Men have a way to thee, shouldst thou be taken. Thou paintest thine eyes with collyrium, and ingest thy finger with henna.

But were I taken, I would be yoked to the string of captives, tied behind the camels.

Thy mount would be the camel and its saddle, but my mount on that day would be the hollow of my foot."

We also read that Ibn Habulah, the Ghassanid, having taken captive the wife of Al-Harith ibn Amr al-Kindi, was overtaken by Al-Harith, who slew him and took back his wife after he had had connection with her. Al-Harith asked her if this had happened, and she answered: "Yes, and by God, no woman has ever had a man like him." Al-Harith, having tied her between two horses, made them

114 THE SHU'UBIYYAH MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

run at full gallop, and she was torn to pieces. He then said the following verses :

" Every woman, though she should make a show of love to thee,
her love is but false.

He who is deceived by woman's love, after Hind [his wife], is
but an ignorant fool."

And the Banu Sulaim carried off Raihanah, sister of 'Amr ibn Ma'di-Karib, the horseman of the Arabs, who says in this connection :

" Is it Raihanah's cry I hear ? It keeps me awake, while my
companions are all asleep."

It is in this poem that he says :

" If you are powerless to do a thing, leave it to do what you
can."

Al-Haufazan raided the Banu Munqidh ibn Zaid-Manat, and carried off Az-Zarqa of the Banu Rabi' Ibnu-l-Harith. She found favour in his eyes, and he found favour in hers ; and he lay with her. Then he was overtaken by Quais ibn 'Asim who rescued Az-Zarqa, and brought her back to her family, after he, too, had lain with her. Now, such were the customs of Arabs and non-Arabs in the time of ignorance. Then God brought about Islam, in which the non-Arabs, too, had a full share ; for the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, was sent to the red and the black of the sons of Adam ; and the first to follow him were one freeman and one slave. There is a difference of opinion as to who these were ; some say these were Abu Bakr and Bilal, while others allege they were 'Ali and Suhaib. When Omar Ibnu-l-Khattab was stabbed by his murderer, he placed this Suhaib at the head of the Muhajirs and

the Ansar to lead them in prayer ; and on Suhaib asking him to appoint a successor, he answered, " I do not feel as though I can appoint a successor." Suhaib then mentioned the names of the six men of Hira, he took exception to every one of them ; and then said, " If Salim, the Mawla of Abu Hudhaifah had been alive, I would not have hesitated about him.' Thereupon the Arab poet thus expressed himself :

" Here is Suhaib ; he led as Imam every one of the Muhajirs, and rose high above all the tribes of the Ansar.
He [*i.e.*, Omar] did not approve of any of them to act as our Imam,—and yet they are the guiding spirits and the leaders of all good men.
Nay, more, had Salim, he of the broken teeth, been now alive, he would have obtained the Caliphate of the whole empire ! These barbarians are ever alive and prosperous, but not we.
Verily the Arabs are blind and greatly in error."

Bujair holds the Arabs to scorn in the following verses for their genealogical differences and their adoption of men of dubious parentage :

" You say that the Indians are the children of Khindif, and that there exists between you and the Barbars a kinship ; That the Dailams are descended from Basil ibn Dhabbah, and the Burjans are sons of 'Amr ibn 'Amir !
All men thus become sons of one man ; and all alike in origin of race !
Surely, the kingly race of the Banu-l-Asfar [*i.e.*, the Greeks] are nobler than you ; and worthier of our kinship are the Chosroes.
Dost thou covet to enter into marriage relationship with me, when thou openly layest claim to false parentage ? What protection can one hope for from a barefaced pretender ?
Thou, in thy vileness, revilest his family and tribe, and foolishly dost extol Tahir."

I have reproduced these verses in a complete form in the chapter on women, men of dubious birth, and the nobly-born.

Al-Hasan ibn Hani has composed the following verses, favouring the opinion of the Shu'ubiyyah.

" I live among a people between whom and me the only ties of relationship are empty claims.

When the head of the tribe calls me by the name of kinsman,
I lightly respond to this ridiculous claim.

The Azd of 'Uman ibn ul-Muhallab raise their heads at first
when families are contending for honour : but their pride
is humbled at last.

So Bakr think that the spirit of prophecy descended on Misra,
while he was still a foetus in the womb !

And Tamim claim that none could be like their Ahnaf to the
end of time.

After this I cannot blame Qais if they were to vaunt of
Qutaibah ! Verily talk flows in various channels."

*Answer of Ibn Qutaibah to the contention of the
Shu'ubiyyah.*

Says Ibn Qutaibah in his *Tafdhilu-l-Arab* [The Superiority of the Arabs]:

As to the party of equality, some of them have laid hold of the letter of some words in the Holy Book and in the Traditions, and decided accordingly, without searching for the true sense of the words. They seized upon the words of the Almighty, "The most honoured of you in the sight of God are those who fear Him most," and His words, "Verily the believers are brothers to each other, do ye make peace between your brothers;" and upon the words of the Prophet in his sermon during the farewell pilgrimage: "Ye people, God has removed away from ye the pride of the times of ignorance, and their vaunting of fathers. No Arab is superior to a foreigner, except with regard to piety. All of ye are from Adam, and Adam is from dust." As

also his saying, "The blood of the Muslims is equally retaliated, and the least among them shall be able to pledge their word, and they shall be a help to each other against their enemies." Now, the true sense of all this is that all believing men are alike before the law, and their positions are the same in the sight of God and in the life to come; for if all men are alike in the things of this world, and no one is superior to the other except so far as the affairs of the next, there will not be in this world high or low, a superior or an inferior. What then, is the force of the Prophet's injunction, "If the chief of a tribe come to ye, do ye receive him honourably," and his saying, "Pardon the faults of men of good positions," and his saying with regard to Qais ibn 'Asim, "This is the lord of the dwellers of the desert"? The Arabs used to say, "The well-being of mankind is assured so long as they differ in degree; but when they become equal in rank to one another, they perish," meaning by this that their condition will continue to be flourishing so long as there are among them people of high degree and good men, but that were they to be made as people of one class, they would be ruined. And when the Arabs wish to depreciate a people they say "they are as like to each other as the teeth of the ass." Indeed, how can men be alike in merit, when things in man's own body, the limbs, are not on an equality, and the joints are not the same; but on the contrary, some of them are superior to others; the head, for instance, is superior to the rest of the body, for it contains the intellect and the

five senses ; and it is said of the heart that it is the king of the body, while some of the limbs are servants and others are served. Ibn Qutaibah goes on to say : Among the weightiest pleas that the Shu'ubiyyah have preferred against the Arabs is to vaunt the fact that Adam is one of them ; and they cite these words of the Prophet : " Do not place me above him, for I am only one of his many excellences." They also glory, in that all the prophets are of the non-Arabs with the exception of four, Hud, Salih, Isma'il and Mohamed ; and they adduce as proof these words of the Almighty, " God has chosen Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran above all men, descendants one from the other, and God is all-hearing, all-knowing." Again, they vaunt of Isaac, son of Abraham ; and that he is son of Sarah ; and say that Isma'il is the son of a slave-girl called Hajar ; and this is what their poet has said :

" In a country wherein 'Ukn has not attached a rope nor pitched a tent, nor Akk nor Hamdan ;

Nor have Jarm or Nahs a habitation therein. It is the dwelling-place of the children of the Free, a land wherein Chosroes built his abodes and in which not a man of the son of the Lakhna [slave] is to be found."

The children of the free, according to them, are the Persians ; and the sons of the Lakhna, in their opinion, are the Arabs, as being descendants of Hajar, who was a slave. But they are wrong in this interpretation, for it is not every slave that can be called Lakhna. That slave-girl is called Lakhna who is employed to do menial service, such as the tending and watering of camels and the gathering of

fuel; the word being derived from al-lakhn, which means stinking smell; for we say of a water-skin "lakhina," i.e., it has become rancid. As for a woman like Hajar, whom God has purified of all stain, and approved of as wife to His friend [i.e., Abraham], and as mother to Isma'il and Mohamed, the pure, whom He made to descend from her, it behoves not a heathen to call her Lakhna, much less a Muslim.

The Reply of the Shu'ubiyyah to Ibn Qutaibah.

One of those who affect the opinion of the Shu'ubiyyah thus replies to Ibn Qutaibah's argument as to the difference in the ranks of men and of some being superior to others, and there being liege lords and vassals among them :

We do not deny that men are of different classes and differ in merit, and that some are superior and some inferior to others, and some noble and others of low degree; but we contend that these differences among men do not arise from their ancestry or lineage, but, on the contrary, from their own deeds and personal character, and from their nobility of soul and high-mindedness. Do you not see that if a man is of a mean spirit and devoid of manliness, he cannot attain a noble position even though he were of the noblest of the families of the Banu Hashim and of the best family of Omayyah, and although he should be of the best stock of Qais? Indeed, he is noble whose deeds are noble, and he is high of degree whose spirit is high: and this is the meaning of the Prophet's words : "If the chief of a tribe come to ye, do you receive him with honour," a d of his saying,

speaking of Qais ibn 'Asim: "This is the lord of the dwellers in tents." He spoke of him in this way for the high position he had acquired among his tribesmen for his defence of their womenfolk and his liberality to all. Do you not see that 'Amir ibn-Tufail, who was of the noblest family in Qais, says :

"Although I am the son of the Lord of 'Amir and her warrior famous in every fight,
Amir has not made me her lord by right of heritage. God forbid that I should rise through father or mother.
But (it is because) I defend her sanctuary, prevent any injury to her, and repulse the attacks of her enemies."

Another poet has said :

"Although our descent is a noble one, we do not rely upon lineage.
We build up as our forefathers built, and we do the like of what they did."

And Quss ibn Sa'idah has said: "I shall give a judgment amongst the Arabs, which no one has ever judged before me, nor will anyone dare to set it aside after me."

"If a man reproaches another for a blemish redeemed by his personal nobility, no blame can attach to him; but whoever lays claim to nobility, being of a vile nature, does so in vain." Similar to this is the saying of 'A'ishah, mother of the Believers: "A man of noble race, if base, should be considered a man of base origin; but a man of base origin, if of noble spirit, should be considered a man of good birth." She means by this that a man ought to be judged by his own disposition and qualities; if these are good, the baseness of his origin does him no

injury whatever ; and if they are bad, the nobility of his origin does him no good whatever. The poet says :

" It is the soul of 'Isam that has ennobled 'Isam.
And taught him to advance boldly to the fight.
And has made of him a great lord."

And a certain man made in the presence of Abd ul-Malik ibn Marwan a speech which was full of eloquence. Charmed with what he had heard, 'Abd ul-Malik asked him : " Whose son art thou, O youth ? " Said he, " I am the son of myself, O Prince of the Faithful; for it is by my mind that I have acquired this position near you." " Thou art right," was the reply. " The Prophet has said, ' The pedigree of a man is his wealth, and his nobility is his religion.' " And Omar Ibn ul-Khattab has said : " If you have wealth, you have distinction, and if you have religion, you have nobility." Indeed, I have not met with a stranger case than that of Ibn Qutaibah in his *Tafdhilu-l-Arab*, for, after exhausting all his powers in proving the superior merits of the Arabs, he finishes by expressing the same view as that of the Shu'ubiyyah, thus demolishing at the end what he had built up in the beginning; for he says at the end of his account :— " And the most equitable view, in my opinion, is that all men are descended from one father and mother; that they were created from dust, and to dust will they return; and they all pass through the uterus and are befouled by impurities. These facts should prevent men of sense from exaggerated ideas about themselves, and from pride and vaunting of their parentage; for after all they shall return to God, where their high

pedigrees will be of no account, and their worldly honours of no consequence save one whose honour is the fear of God, and whose capital is obedience to His laws."

The Shu'ubiyyah also say that the Arabs in the time of ignorance used to take each other's women as wives during their raids, without the marriage contract, and without waiting the necessary period to see if the woman was with child from her husband. How can anyone say who his father was? they say. Al-Farazdaq, in his eulogy of the Banu Dhabbah, extols them for their carrying off of women, and says, in reference to a captive woman whom they had taken from Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah: "She fell to the ground and they held her in their embrace, and their only cover was their long spears."

In the foregoing pages I have given, I trust, a sufficiently exhaustive history of the origin, growth, and development of this most intensely interesting movement in the history of Islam; and though it would be unsafe to differ from so eminent a scholar as Dr Goldziher, who holds that the Shu'ubiyyite party was not a party of the discontented and the rebels,* still it is impossible to believe that a party which preached the gospel of equality and which continuously fought for light and liberty was utterly divorced from politics or political aspirations, and had no connection whatever with the political conditions of those times. I am inclined to believe, as I have stated at the outset, that such a party could not have

* Goldziher, "Muh. Studien," vol. i., p. 147.

at all come to existence had it not been for the despotism of the Omayyads, which in defiance of the principles of Islam—namely, equality and brotherhood of all Muslims—riveted every shackle tighter and stretched every breach wider between the ruling race and the foreign converts to Islam. The Arab warriors and their descendants could not, for an instant, conceive that conversion to Islam raised a foreigner to a level of equality with the genuine-born Arab. The Arab always looked upon himself as belonging to the ruling race which was called upon to govern the foreigners, the barbarians, the Ajami. Here lay the cause—destructive alike of the Islamic theocracy and the Arab Imperialism—which developed the growth of the idea of nationality, further aggravated and intensified, as it was, by years of misrule and maladministration, nepotism, and jobbery. While the theoretical Islam did not believe in the distinction of races and colour, the ruling house of Omayyah claimed for themselves rights and privileges and prerogatives founded not upon Islam but upon might and power, and pursued a policy of unmitigated despotism which reached the height of its aggressiveness in the person of Hajjaj. The subject races felt that conversion to Islam did not, after all, secure equality with the Arabs, and that the Islamic teaching, as interpreted at least by the Arab aristocracy, was a fiction, a myth, and a mockery. The more the learned class developed among foreign converts the greater became the influence of the client, and all the more heavily did this circle feel its subordination to the ruling class consisting of the descendants of the conquerors.

In their souls lay sheathed the swords of the spirit ready to flash forth and smite, and hence the unceasing insurrections and rebellions under the Omayyads, if not initiated, at all events largely backed and supported by foreign converts. The entire policy of the Omayyads was deeply offensive to the Muslims of non-Arab nationality, who, though crushed under the iron heels of Hajjaj, could not forget the glory and splendour of their national traditions and national history. After Hajjaj, though the Muslim empire was outwardly quiet for a time, still there were ominous undertones of disaffection which repeatedly burst forth in the shape of insurrections and rebellions. The Arab and Ajam represented two adverse currents of political thoughts and political creed, incompatible, irreconcilable, eternal in antagonism as the poles. The origin and beginning of the Shu'ubiyyah movement, therefore, we cannot but trace back to the political conditions of the times. On any other supposition we can scarcely give a satisfactory explanation of the origin of this movement. The various nations included in the Muslim empire—the Arabs, the Persians, the Syrians, the Nabathæans, the Egyptians, the Turks—were all Muslims, and in the eye of Islam brothers irrespective of nationality. Their faith alone was the passport to the full rights of citizenship in the theocracy. Islamic government, in its essence, was not local nor territorial nor national, but religious. It was one compact confederacy united by the tie of Islam, and as such there was no room in it for the idea of nationality. If this original spirit of the Islamic government had been maintained and

kept up, there would have been no occasion for emphasizing the distinction of nationality. All—of whatever race or nationality—would have enjoyed equal rights and privileges. But the high ideal of Islam failed, and failed most hopelessly in practical application, and inasmuch as similar rights and privileges (as enjoyed by the Arab aristocracy) were not conceded to foreign converts, they winced and smarted under their political disabilities, and as a protest against the injustice of the Government dreamed of the days of their national government and sang of the glories of their forefathers. This party, therefore, was the direct outcome of the storm and stress of oppression and despotism under which the subject races suffered and pined in the days of the Omayyads. True, it was only under the Abbasids that this party boldly stepped forward as an organized body and openly advocated its doctrines, but it does not follow from this that the masses of foreign converts, under the Omayyads, were not animated by the same spirit or inspired by the same zeal.

As I have already stated, under the Abbasids better days dawned upon the Mawali, and they gathered strength and fought their battle. Their learned men only gave expression to the thoughts and sentiments of the inarticulate masses, thoughts and sentiments that were, so to speak, long in the air. In the arguments of the Shu'ubiyyah party we cannot fail to detect an animus and bitterness which savour rather of political than literary controversy. One word and I have done. According to my reading of the history

of this movement it illustrates one supreme and eternal truth which all governments might well take to heart. Physical force might prolong the existence of the body-politic but it cannot insure its permanence. The only sure foundation of a government is in the loyalty of its subjects, but loyalty cannot be secured by despising them and excluding them from their legitimate share in the government and its administration. History repeats itself, and those very problems which confronted the Omayyad statesmen nearly a thousand years ago are now before us, different perhaps in their setting, but in their essence unchanged. No better epilogue can I find for this paper than in the language of the late Bishop of Oxford, perhaps the greatest historian of our age : "For the roots of the present lie deep in the past, and nothing is dead to the man who would learn how the present comes to be what it is."

IV

GHALIB: AN APPRECIATION

LITERATURE is a mirror of national life, and national life the resultant of various influences, partly under and partly beyond the control of man—*influences of climate, of physical conditions, of political freedom or political subordination.* These influences, and many others besides, are too marked to remain unnoticed. In the East, for instance, certain forms of poetry have never struck root. The East is a stranger to sea-poetry, such as we find in Heine, or Swinburne, or Theodore Watts-Dunton. The East is a stranger to those sublime hymns to liberty and freedom such as we find in Milton, or Collins, or Shelley, or Victor Hugo. We have no such worship of the good and beautiful as distinguishes the poetry of Keats. We have not that buoyant hope and that invincible optimism which characterize the poetry of Browning and Tennyson. Nor have we anything to compare with that rapturous adoration of Nature which was the cult of Wordsworth.

In the East it is not physical Nature, political freedom, or worship of the beautiful which inspires the muse. It is rather man and his destiny which is the

absorbing subject of the poet's activity. All his powers, his art, his genius, are concentrated on this subject and this alone. Hence there is not that richness, variety, expansiveness which we notice in European poetry, and hence there is that want of the flavour of originality with which European writers taunt us. But our poets in their own sphere are supreme, matchless, incomparable.

The Oriental, by his mental constitution, is mystical, melancholy, imaginative rather than practical, fatalistic in his tendencies—and this is not because his religion inculcates fatalism, but because he sees both in actual life and reads in the records of the past the lesson that there is nothing certain or stable in life ; the periodical epidemics sweep away, at one stroke, thousands of human lives, the whims and passions of his sovereigns exalt or debase his fellow-creatures without a moment's notice. At every step he is confronted with the thought of the folly of human efforts and the futility of human wishes. He regards life as a game of chance, and hence the dominant note of our poetry is resignation, melancholy, quietism. From the weariness of life he, in spite of himself, is drawn and diverted to religion and mysticism. Hence the vein of mysticism, hence the impassioned invocations to Allah, hence the lamentations over the feebleness of human effort, the impotence of human will. It is the spirit of Job which we not infrequently encounter in our poetry! We are struck therein by a note of profound melancholy and deep pathos ; a note of weariness and disgust with life; a note of utter hollowness of worldly ambitions and worldly dreams of

prosperity and an accent of revolt against the goodness and justness of Providence. Apart from the natural tendencies of Oriental writers to melancholy, to dejection, to sadness, there was yet another cause, a contributory cause, which tended to deepen, to accentuate this tendency in India. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the star of the Mohamedans had set ; the glory and greatness of the Mohamedans were at an end. Those, therefore, who lived and wrote in that age could scarcely shake off the sense of utter forlornness, ennui, weariness, or successfully resist the thought of the emptiness and hollowness of human hopes and the uselessness of a struggle against fate and destiny which had flung them to earth vanquished, prostrate, bleeding. To men born and bred in that atmosphere of sadness and depression the world seemed a dreary waste and life an insufferable, insupportable burden.

It was not a mere poetical rhapsody which prompted *Sawda* to write :

میں ہوں طاؤس اتشبار کیسی ہی بھار آئے
نہ با صحراء سرے دارم نہ با گلزار سودائے
بہرسو میروم از خویش میجوشد تماشانے

Nor was it a mere flight of imagination which called forth the despairing utterance from Mir Taqi :

ہر صبح خمرن میں شام کی ہے ہمنے
خون نا بہ کشی مدام کی ہے ہمنے
یہہ محلت کہ جسکو کہتے ہیں عصر
مرہ سر کے غرض تمام کی ہے ہمنے

Or again from Nasikh :

بیقدر کیا کلفت ایام نے مجھکو
دُوہر تو ہوں لیکن ہوں نہاں گرد کی تھے میں

No ! Their lives were one supreme, tragic procession, and these sad, sorrowful poems were but expressions and revelations of their inward self. In the depths of their strong nature there was a struggle, an impatience, an inquietude, an ennui which continues to the end and which leaves one with a sense of profound melancholy. Even in the Masnavi of Mir Hassan, with its light and shadow, its playful, joyous, humorous touches, there runs the deep undercurrent of melancholy, which no thoughtful reader can miss. It was again this very strain of sadness which has found its noble expression in Anis and Dabir. The atmosphere, steeped through and through as it was with melancholy, has very largely coloured the thoughts and sentiments of our writers. They pass in a single moment from anxiety to exultation, and back again from exultation to still deeper melancholy. But it is not the repulsive, hateful melancholy of a misanthrope, but the chaste, subdued sorrow of a nature in which struggle and revolt is over, and which accepts, with a joyous acquiescence, the inevitable and the unavoidable. It is not the melancholy of Schopenhauer, but rather that of Heine.

What are the functions and duties of a poet ? Do our poets fulfil those functions and duties ? What is it that makes the true poet immortal ? What is it that makes his work live and endure and survive the

vicissitudes of time and fate, the ruins and wreckage of changing fashions? What is it that confers upon his works the unfading charm, the deathless beauty?

"The poet, expressing pain as well as pleasure, becomes," says Stopford Brooke, "at one with all who feel pain. Conscious then of his brotherhood with man, and far more conscious of it than by sympathy only with man's pleasure, strength and passion flow into his poetry. Men feel themselves expressed, sympathized with, and empowered by the noble representation of their trouble, and send back to the poet their gratitude and sympathy, till he, conscious of their affection, is himself uplifted and inspired. Then his poetic power, fed by human love, increases. A fuller emotion, a wider thought, a knowledge of life deepened by imagination into something far more true than any intellectual philosophy of life can give, fill his verse with the unsought for, revealing phrases which seem to express, with strange simplicity, the primary thoughts of Being, to speak from the secret place where the laws of the universe abide."

It is, therefore, the sympathy with human joys, sorrows and sufferings, the power of expressing those feelings which though felt by all is not capable of being expressed by all, the talent for interpreting those subtlest impressions which Nature makes upon us: it is these qualities and these alone which make the poet at once a priest and a prophet. Poetry interprets both the outer world of physical nature and the inner world of emotional man. Poetry interprets,

says Matthew Arnold, by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outer world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature. In other words, poetry is interpretive both by having *natural magic* in it, and by having *moral profundity*. In both ways it interprets man ; it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him with himself and the universe.

The poet appeals to the permanent, eternal sentiments of man : sentiments which defy the changes of time and circumstances ; sentiments which all humanity, apart from the barriers of race and religion, shares. Language improves, religion changes, the conception of the Deity varies from age to age, but amidst endless changes, innovations, alterations in social life and social customs ; amidst endless additions to and subtractions from the stock of human knowledge, there is the human nature ever the same. The mystery of pain, of suffering, of life, of death ; the sorrows arising from disappointed hopes or blighted love ; the anguish and uneasiness due to poverty and privation ; the unsuccessful war waged against fate and destiny : these are the themes which will never cease to delight, to captivate, to inspire, to uplift men from their "dead selves to higher things." The poetry of pleasure, the poetry of pain, cannot fail to strike a responsive chord in the human heart. It is the delight of prosperity, the solace of adversity.

Das ist das Leben, Kind ! Ein Ewig Jammern,

Ein Ewig Abschiednehmen, Ew'ges Trennen ! What a mournful fact ; and yet how true, how appealing ! It is the truth drawn from the fount of life. But, like Heine, has not Saib sung the very same thing :

لاؤه ارد و داغ عزیزان رفتہ است
ایں محلت کہ عمر دراز است نام او

The secret of that richness, freshness and sweetness which the true poet possesses ; the secret of that immortality which laughs decay and death to scorn, is the universality of his feeling, the catholicity of his sentiments, the firm grasp of the permanent elements of life. Though our own Indian poetry is modelled upon Persian poetry, yet it is neither a servile imitation nor a lifeless translation either. The thoughts may be the same, but the expression of those thoughts is original, striking, charming. Who can read Mir Taqi, Momin Khan, Zawq, Atash, Nasikh, and, last but not least, Ghalib, without feeling and realizing the hand of the master, the genius of the true poet ? Their sweetness and serenity, their height and elevation, their fortitude and meekness, their laughter and tears are too subtle, too delicate, too fine to admit of description or even an attempt at description. They belong to that galaxy of intellectual giants whom the world calls immortals.

It would have been nothing short of rashness to write the life of Ghalib in English if we had already a life such as Hali has written in Hindustani. But there is none in English so far as the present writer is aware, and he has undertaken this task with no

other object than to bring Ghalib and his works to the notice of readers to whom Hali's splendid monograph is a sealed book. The genius of Ghalib is indeed, worthy of a wider celebrity than it has hitherto attained, and Europe has still to learn that only in 1869 died the man whose Kasidas rival the Kasidas of Anwari and Khaqani ; whose gazals excel the gazals of Urfi and Talib ; whose "Rubáiyáts" take rank by the side of the "Rubáiyáts" of Omar Khayyám, and whose prose outshines the prose of Abul Fazal and Zahuri (Hali, p. 178).

What are, then, the characteristics of our poet? His prose and poetry are autobiographical fragments giving us an insight into his life, which was one of absolute weariness and grinding struggle, painful indifference on the part of his contemporaries and lukewarm support on that of the friends. Ghalib is essentially a poet of self-introspection. He sings of life and all the phases of life. He sings of the liquid ruby and the blushing roses. He fully opens his heart to his readers and sings of the tragedies of his own life : his fallen fortune, his illusive and ever-receding hopes, his galling poverty, his unavailing efforts, his sceptical beliefs occasionally relieved by a buoyant faith in the goodness and justness of Providence, his unconquerable faith in the immortality of his poems ; in fine, his prose and poetry are the records of his various and varying moods ; now of bright hope, now of impenetrable gloom. But besides being a poet of supreme parts he is a prose-writer of great attainments. He stands incomparably the greatest prose-writer of our age. Its winning grace,

its delightful simplicity, its wit and humour, its fascinating rhythm, ease, spontaneity, flow and charm have not yet been rivalled, much less surpassed. This is not an extravagant laudation, but a sober estimate formed by no less a writer than his distinguished biographer, Hali of Paniput. There is yet another feature of Ghalib's writings which we might notice here. His thoughts are fine, subtle, delicate, and are as original as they are finely worded. Both his Urdu and Persian divans are literary gems : opal, ruby and sapphire all in one.* His religious views, indeed, cannot be passed over unnoticed. He was a Unitarian who had long cast aside the unessential elements of religion. He wore no sectarian badge, no sectarian colour. He professed Islam, but Islam unfettered, untrammelled, unencumbered by dogmatism, by sectarianism, by narrow-mindedness.

بِاَنْ مِيَاوِيزَا سَهْ پُدْرَ فَرِزَنْدَ آذِرَ رَانْگَر
هَرَكَسَ كَهْ شَدَ صَاحِبَ نَظَرَ دَيْنَ بَزَرَ گَانَ خَوَشَ نَكْرَد

This couplet gives us an idea of his bold, fearless independence of thought. In one of his letters he writes, "I am a pure Unitarian and a true believer," and so he was. It was precisely this spirit which made him so uncommonly liberal, tolerant, sympathetic with other religions, and which made him say :

حَرْفٌ حَرْفٌ دَرْ وَذَاقَ فَتَنَهُ جَا خَوَاهَدَ گَرْفَت
دَسْتَهَ نَارَ شَيْخَهُ وَبَرَهَمَنَ خَوَاهَدَ شَدَن

* I have in my possession a copy of Ghalib's Persian Divan, which was written at the instance of Nawab Mustapha Khan, and revised by the poet.

This is a feature as prominent and noticeable as his avowed contempt for public opinion. Though Ghalib lived in an age and among a people who, as a whole, were neither scholars nor judges of scholarship—the Golden Age of Mohamedan learning in India had long gone by—still there were men, a very few, indeed, but there were men alive, his contemporaries, who acknowledged his great powers and recognized his intellectual superiority. Such were Fazl Huq Khairabadi, Mufti Sadruddin Khan, Abdullah Khan, Ulavi, Imam Bukhsh Sahbai, Momin Khar, Nawab Mustafa Khan, Nawab Zia-ud-din, Syed Golam Ali Khan, Wahshat and Hali, his biographer. Besides these, there were Bahadur Shah and the Nawab of Rampur who offered him pecuniary assistance, though, we must confess, it was not much to speak of. Utterly unrecognized even in his lifetime he was not ; but it was a recognition clearly not commensurate with his attainments. Fate has never been exceptionally kind to men of letters, and Ghalib shared the common lot in this respect. What man of genius has not felt what Ghalib has felt and expressed ? What man of genius has not appealed, and appealed unsuccessfully, for recognition, which his contemporaries only scantily and grudgingly conceded ? Has not Saib said :

بے اجل یاد کسے خلق بے نیکی نہ کند
مرگ این طائفہ را بر سر انحصار آرد

Not vanity, not extravagance, but the consciousness of the certainty and permanence of his fame it is that finds expression ; not faint, feeble, faltering, but firm,

distinct, unequivocal expression, in a language such as this :

تاز دیوانم کہ سرمست سخن خواهد شد
 این میے از قحط خریدار کہن خواهد شد
 کوکبے رادر عدم اوچ قبولی بوده است
 شهرت شعرم بگیتی بعد من خواهد شد

It has a strain of inspiration, a prophecy—fulfilled to the letter. Well might he have applied to himself the noble lines of Heine :

“ Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem Meere,
 Hat Sturm und Ebb' und Flut,
 Und manche schöne Perle
 In seiner Tiefe ruht.”

And well might we liken his heart to the sea, which in spite of its storm, its ebb, its flow, in spite of its agitated surface, conceals beneath it its choicest and finest pearls. Would that we had the dates of the composition of the poems. They would have enabled us to construct a biography out of them, but however we may mourn this loss we are in no lack of materials. His own letters, the monograph of Hali, the notice of Azad in his Tazkirah, are materials enough for the biographer to work upon. The object of his biographer, however, should be not merely to chronicle the events of his life, but to show how far and to what extent he was the product of his own age, and the precursor of the next ; to consider, to estimate, to fix his place not only among the poets of India, but among the poets of the world. This is still virgin soil, an

unbroken field ; and it is, for that reason alone, a subject worth pursuing, a goal worth attaining. The lustre of that immortal name will increase more and more as education increases and as appreciation grows of that strange, sad book of the heart's experience—the Divan of Mirza Asad-ullah Khan Ghalib.

V

MY FATHER: HIS LIFE AND
REMINISCENCES

باین رواق زیر جد نوشته اند بزر
که جز نکوئی اهل کرم مخواهد ماند

"The most precious and intimate recollection of each man's memory is his series of recollected portraits and biographies of persons he has individually known. A peculiar sacredness attaches to these recollections of persons when they themselves are dead. . . . Every living man or woman can reckon up those select of the dead who are most memorable to him or to her; and sometimes there may be a duty, or at least an impulse, that one should speak to others of the dead whom *he* remembers, and of whom *they* know little or nothing."—PROFESSOR MASSON.

I

In writing this short sketch of my father's life, I have been actuated neither by vanity nor self-glorification, but simply by that sense of duty which I owe to him and to those numerous friends of his who have been good enough to ask me to give them a brief account of his earthly pilgrimage. It is always a delicate and difficult task to write the life of a contemporary; much more so is it for a son to attempt the biography of his father. The tenderest ties of filial duty and devotion necessarily render him unfit for such a task.

We can scarcely hope to find in him the severe impartiality of an historian, or the equally unbiassed mentality of a judge. I must, therefore, at once inform my readers that, though I lay claim neither to the impartiality of an historian nor to the impersonal attitude of a judge, still, in these pages, I have endeavoured to give a true and faithful account of the career which has so recently yet all too soon ended. I have abstained alike from extravagant laudation and captious criticism. I have merely placed the facts before the reader, and have left him to draw his own conclusions. My father's public services, his rank and position in the profession to which he belonged, his literary works, and the history of the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore, are too well known to require my interposition, or to call for my assistance ; and I might easily have left these subjects to be dealt with by others more competent than myself to weigh, to test, to focus, to adjust ; but the outer world, after all, never secures more than a partial glimpse of a man's life. It can never, unassisted, hope to know the man in his true inwardness—his varied relations with his friends, relatives, and dependants. Nor is that world expected to have an idea of the subtle influences which a man of commanding intellect and powerful will exercises over his immediate and more private entourage, the secret springs of his actions and deeds, his tone and temper, his religious beliefs, his unexpressed political views, a thousand little kindnesses secretly done, and good offices privately performed. But these are just the things which reveal the true nature of the man,

and the nobility of his soul. Moreover, the public sees only the ultimate result of a life's labour. It knows not the slow and painful steps through which that result was achieved, the innumerable obstacles that lay in the path of success, the strange reverses of fortune, and the strength of will and purpose, dauntless courage, and unflinching pertinacity needed finally to conquer and triumph. In other words, the public sees only the last act in a series of failures, otherwise known as success; but it is the intermediary stages which are alike interesting and instructive, and a lesson and an example to others. A life of the donor of the Bankipore Library, written even by me, would scarcely fail to bring out those qualities of the mind and the heart which made him the idol of his friends and one of the most interesting figures of his time. Fraud and imposture can never long continue to impose upon the credulity of mankind. It is the sterling qualities of the mind and the heart alone which win for a man a place in the annals of his community, or the history of his nation. "Call no man happy until he is dead," is as true of my father as of any other mortal. His life's voyage, like that of others, was not, and, as things are, could not be, all prosperous. He had his moments of deep despondency and blank despair. He had his share of sorrows and griefs, bitter disappointments, and sad vicissitudes. In the following pages I shall recount the story of that life which, in early manhood, was overcast with heavy unmoving banks of cloud impervious to any ray of sunlight, but which was destined to end in peace, serenity, and honour.

Among the heralds and pioneers of Muslim learning in India, history, I doubt not, will assign him a place next to Sir Syed Ahmed and Mohsin ul-Mulk. Like Sir Syed, he devoted himself to the cause of the Mohamedans, and, like him too, he spent his fortune for their benefit and advancement. Throughout life he exhibited an active courage, a resolute endurance, a cheerful self-restraint, and an exulting self-sacrifice. He ignored the claims of his family for the higher and nobler claims of his community, and I can suggest no better and more fitting epitaph for his grave than the following words of a great French philosopher : "I love my family more than myself, my country more than my family, and humanity more than my country" (I quote from memory). His whole life was but a commentary on these words. It was neither weight of purse nor length of pedigree which brought him to the forefront, but his own inherent qualities and intrinsic merits, his single-minded devotion to learning, and his overmastering passion for books.

The most charming feature of his life was his central trust in God. He never allowed himself to be anxious for the morrow, or to suffer the well-known text of the Qur'an وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلِيَتَوْكِّلُ الْمُرْءُونَ to fade from his mind. To the last he believed that in purity of heart rather than in outward cleansing, and in spirit rather than in the letter, lay the real strength of religious beliefs.

"When the end comes," wrote John Stuart Mill, to a friend in pensive vein,* "the whole life will appear

* Lord Morley, "Miscellanies," 4th Series, p. 151.

but as a day, and the only question of any moment to us then will be : Has that day been wasted ?" Wasted it has not been by those who have been, for however short a time, a source of happiness and moral good even to the narrowest circle. But there is only one plain rule of life eternally binding, and independent of all variations of creed, embracing equally the greatest moralities and the smallest ; it is this : " Try thyself unweariedly till thou findest the highest thing thou art capable of doing, faculties and circumstances being both duly considered, and then do it." Be this our standard now, and let the reader pronounce his own judgment. In the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore, where under one roof are collected, as though in a shrine, the literary remains of the great savants of Islam, he has built for himself a monument which will last so long at least as the destiny of India is linked with that of Great Britain, if, perchance, no longer. There, in course of time, as the mists of ignorance lift, will rise a school of Oriental learning ; and thence will radiate beams of culture which will illumine the whole of the Indian Peninsula. The claims of the founder of the Oriental Library on the gratitude of the Muslims—nay, of the entire literary world—nothing but jealousy can overlook or disparage. I now proceed to details.

II

My father was born at Chapra on August 2, 1842. Soon after his birth the family removed to Bankipore, where my father was brought up under the direct

supervision of my grandfather, a distinguished pleader, a man of letters, and a passionate lover of books. In 1854 Mr. Travers, the then District Judge of Patna, induced my grandfather to send his son to the Patna High School, where he studied till 1859. Owing to the disturbances and commotions consequent upon the Mutiny, the Patna High School was that year abolished, and my father had to wend his way to Calcutta, which was not then, as it is now, the City of Palaces, the centre of fashion, and the headquarters of commerce.

In those days there was no direct railway communication between Calcutta and Patna, and the journey was, as might be expected, at once costly and perilous. With wallet and staff, the young student nevertheless undertook the pilgrimage in quest of learning. At Calcutta he was placed under the charge of Nawab Amir Ali Khan, who treated him with the utmost kindness and consideration. In 1861 he passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University, but his stay in Calcutta had to be cut short, as the climate never agreed with him, and he returned to Bankipore. On his return he joined the Law Class, with a view to qualifying as a pleader. Between 1861 and 1868, when my father was admitted to the Patna Bar, he passed through great hardships and sore trials. My grandfather's health began to fail, and as time went by he found it more and more difficult to attend to professional work—the only support and maintenance of the family. The whole burden fell on my father, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he managed to keep the family together. In spite of accumulating woes and miseries he attended

law classes, and at the same time earned a small income. It was during this period that he applied for the post of Naib under a Munsiff, but, as fate would have it, his application was refused. He, however, obtained the post of Peshkar to the District Judge, but he and Mr. Latour, the Judge, could not agree, and he had to throw up his post. The next appointment that he held was that of a Deputy-Inspector of Schools, but this was also for only a period of fifteen months. Misfortunes and disappointments, instead of depressing his spirits, only stirred him into fresh activity, and he determined to fight the battle of life. It was always with emotion that he referred to the sad experiences of those times—the mental anguish, the bitter privations, the terrible sufferings through which he had passed. These unhappy days, however, were to end, and they did end, with his enrolment at the Patna Bar in 1868. There was a sudden change of fortune, and his progress in the profession was rapid and assured. Within a couple of years he was perfectly well established, and commanded almost the largest civil practice in Patna. Nor was this unexpected; he inherited to the fullest extent not only his father's passion for books, but also his talents. We can form some idea of the latter's position at the Patna Bar by the certificate which Mr. Travers, the Judge, gave him on February 28, 1855.

"Mohamed Bukhsh, a pleader in the Patna Court, is a very excellent lawyer. In his argument he is very much to be depended on as a close and accurate reasoner. I place much confidence in him, and think

that he does great credit to the character of his profession and the Court generally. I have great pleasure in giving him the certificate, and hope that he will always maintain the reputation which he now holds.

“ W. TRAVERS,
“ Judge.”

My father steadily rose in his profession and in the estimation of the local officials, and served the public in various capacities. In the letter of Mr. W. F. Macdonell, dated October 22, 1874, we have a clear and disinterested testimony which will not be out of place here.

To MOULVI KRUDA BUKHSH KHAN.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have much pleasure in sending you the certificate I promised. I can honestly say that I consider you one of the very best pleaders at the Patna Bar, and last year when it was proposed that a Law Professor shall be appointed who knew Hindustani as well as English, I recommended you for the post as being by far the best fitted for the appointment. Your father was a gentleman much spoken of by everyone, and he was one of the leading men at the Bar, and you have certainly well sustained the family reputation. I trust to hear of your continued success.

“ I remain,
“ Yours truly,
“ W. F. MACDONELL,
“ Late Judge of Patna.”

He obtained a certificate of honour for his work on the School Committee in 1877, and when local self-governing bodies were created by Lord Ripon he was appointed the first Vice-Chairman of the Patna Municipality and of the Patna District Board. Almost all the qualities of a successful advocate he possessed, and possessed in a remarkable degree. He had keen intelligence, ready wit, a remarkable memory, a wonderful grasp of facts, and a rare power of advocacy. While ever avoiding friction with the Court, he nevertheless always stood up for his rights.

On the civil side he was reckoned almost without a peer, but he always had a horror of criminal practice, and never seriously took to it. In 1880 he was appointed Government Pleader of Patna, and in 1881, for public services, he was made a Khan Bahadur. In 1891 he founded the Oriental Public Library, of which we shall hear more in the sequel, and in 1895 he was appointed Chief Justice of the Nizam's High Court for a term of three years. In 1898, on his return from Hyderabad, he reverted to the Bar, but a stroke of paralysis, which he had that year, so completely shattered his nerves that he never felt himself again. He recovered, but his health began to decline, and he grew weaker and weaker. His demise would perhaps have come much earlier than it actually did had it not been for the anxious care and tender solicitude of my brother Shahabuddin and his wife. They were always with him, and took the greatest care of his health. In 1903 the title of C.I.E. was conferred on him, and the Government of India was pleased to

appoint him Secretary of the Library on a salary of Rs. 200, and to make a grant of Rs. 8,000 in liquidation of his debts. I shall here insert the letters of Sir Charles Lyall and Sir James Bourdillon, the former being a letter of congratulation on his obtaining the C.I.E., and the latter conveying the announcement of the grant of Rs. 8,000.

"INDIA OFFICE,
"WHITEHALL,
"June 1, 1908.

"MY DEAR MOULVIE SAHIB,

"Pray accept my hearty congratulations on the C.I.E., which I see in this morning's paper has been conferred upon you. I wish it had come long ago. It has been most thoroughly earned by your long service to Government and by the public spirit with which you have devoted your means and your labour to the establishment of the Bankipore Library. May you live long to enjoy it. I trust that Salahuddin is making good progress at the Calcutta Bar. I hear from him occasionally when he sends papers to the Reviews here, and I am very glad to be of any assistance to him that is in my power. I have in hand an edition of the Mufaddaliyat with Al-Anbari's commentary, which will take me some years to get published. The commentary is a very full one, but so far I have heard of only one manuscript of it, and there will be a good deal of difficulty in constituting a satisfactory text.

"Sincerely yours,
"C. J. LYALL."

"THE SHRUBBERRY,
"DAEJELING,

"MY DEAR MOULVIE,

"October 14, 1908.

"It gives me great pleasure to be able to inform you that the Government of India have sanctioned the payment to you of Rs. 8,000 for the liquidation of your debts. I am glad that this sanction has been received before I leave the Province, and I congratulate you heartily. I hope that this gift from the Government will relieve you from all your anxieties.

"Believe me to be,

"Yours very truly,

"J. A. BOURDILLON."

For the last fifteen months his health was fast giving way. He was growing feebler and feebler, and he had to cease from attending court; but he could not be idle, and during this period he spent most of his time in the Library, reading books and writing articles.

As early as 1874, as Mr. Macdonell's letter shows, my father's reputation was made. But seventeen years had yet to elapse before my grandfather's wish, expressed on his death-bed to his son—namely, to found a public library—was an accomplished fact. My grandfather's favourite couplet was :

زندہ سست کسی کے در تبارش * مساند خلفے بی۔ دکاںش
and time has amply justified its application to his case. My father not only maintained the family reputation, but secured for it an honourable place in the literary history of India.

III

So far I have said nothing regarding our family history. A few words will suffice. Unlike most of our countrymen, we do not trace our descent either from the Prophet of Arabia or from some great hero of Islam, or from some spoliating despot of a bygone age. Nor do we need such meretricious trappings. The Province of Behar (I may be permitted to say without vanity) can scarcely point to another Mohamedan family which can count three generations of learned men. I mean men who enjoy not merely local, but Indian, if not European, fame. Tradition traces our descent from Kazi Hibatullah, one of the compilers of the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, but I am not prepared to treat this seriously. There are, so far as I can see, no sufficient data for the establishment of any such claim, and I must therefore reject it as unproven, if not as a pure fiction.*

* In my grandfather's Bayadh, written in a fine *Shikasta Amīz Nastalīq*, I find an account of our family (MS., Bankipore Library). Besides the passage in the Bayadh, I have no other authority, so far, which connects our family with Kazi Hibatullah, one of the compilers of the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, and, curiously enough, the passage under discussion does not throw any light as to who Kazi Hibatullah, our ancestor, was. This much is clear : that our family originally came from Delhi, settled down at Chapra, and eventually removed to Bankipore. It is also clear that from the earliest times the members of our family have been, more or less, noted for learning, and as such were men of position and influence. My father never set much value on unauthenticated traditions, and believed more in personal distinction and individual merit than in proud pedigrees or fanciful descent. The passage in the Bayadh runs thus :

نسب نامہ بندہ محمد بخش خان این ست کہ بندہ ولد جناب علی بخش مرحوم این شیخ رمضان علی این شیخ محمد باقر این قاسمی شیخ ہبۃ اللہ مرحوم مغفور صدیقی

My father, though thoroughly aristocratic in his ways and habits, always deplored and deprecated the tendency of his countrymen to invent a pedigree or claim fanciful descent. He regarded such a tendency as the surest sign of national decadence and demoralization, and the last refuge of the unworthy and the incompetent. In this connection he often used to quote the famous lines of Amir-ibn Tufail, one of the noblest of the Qur'aish :

نسا و دهلي وطننا - از دهلي آمده او بمقام اوكى خلع مارن مقيم شدند - شادي دخنه هان بي بي جنگلى از ملا بهو صاحب که از اولاد مولانا مجدد الدين ساكن در پيشه خلع ترهت و دندند - شد - و شادي جد دختر برادر خرد مرحوم بى عاصمه نمودند و شادي جناب على يخش مرحوم از بى حليمه بنت شيمه محمد عيوض صاحب ساكن قصبه مانجهبي خلع مارن - و حال نسب شان اينست که مولانا قطب و مولانا محمود فاروقى بو برادر بودند از اولاد مولانا قطب - شيخ محمد عيوض صاحب و از اولاد مولانا محمود صاحب - شيمه قول محمد بوجود آمد - شيمه قول محمد صاحب يك دختر باسم بي بي حبيب و يك بسرنام فتح محمد و دخترکه بود منسوب بشيمه محمد عيوض شد - ازان دختر تولد شد باسم بي بي حليمه والده اجاده كمترين و شيخ فتح محمد را پسری بنام شيمه مخدوم يخش که او شان منسوب به همه: شيرۀ مير الپي يخش صاحب ساكن رتون بوره شدند - ازان شيمه بوره يخش صاحب برادر اموی موجود آند که شادي شان از دختر شيمه قطب يخش موضع شاه لواز بور شد و شيخ محمد عيوض را همشيرۀ حقيقى بي بي باصره برد که بموضع حسن بوره مخصوص شدند - از تبرستان شان ميد بهادر على و سيد عنايت حسین و چهارمل حسین صاحب و شيمه يخش حسین صاحب و دیگر صاحبان ساکنان چگ مران و حسن بوره هستند - از ملا بهو صاحب شيمه بلى الله بسر بوجود آمدند و شادي شان بموضع کو هتا او دختر شيمه شمس الدين صاحب که يكی از اولاد قاضی عبد الرحمن قدوه بودند گردید - و شادي كمترين از دختر شيمه ولی الله صاحب مرحوم مغفور است و از بى بي باصره چهار دختر است يكی بى بي بنتها زوجة شيمه بير يخش ساكن مبار كيور مادر مولوي على احمد صاحب و حسین يخش - و مسمة خورن زوجة ميد بير على ساكن چگ مران فقط و دیگری بى بي امنان هرف بى بي کرما زوجه سيد فتحه على عرف مير گهانسي ساکن موضع چگ حیران برگنه بار - از بطن شان ميد بهادر على مرحوم و ميد عنايت حسین - سیوسی بى بي نعمایا زوجة مولایی غلام اشرف ساکن حسن بوره از بطن شان متشی يخش حسین بسر و چهار دختران يكی مسمة بى بي بهیک زوجة شيمه على چان ساکن موضع شيخپوره دیگری بى بي فتو زوجة مولایی على احمد صاحب سیوسی بى بي میر گهانی زوجة مید عنايت حسین و چهارمی دختر بى بي باصره مسمة ساینه بودند لاولد فوت گردند *

وَتِي وَانْ كُنْتْ ابْنْ سَيِّدِ عَامِرٍ
 وَفَارِسَهَا الْمُشْهُورُ فِي كُلِّ مَوْكِبٍ
 فَمَا سَوْدَتْنِي عَامِرُ عَنْ وَرَأْسِهِ
 ابْنِ اللَّهِ ابْنِ اسْمَوْ بَامْ وَلَا ابْنِ
 وَلَكَتْنِي احْمَى حَمَاهَا وَأَقْتَلَى
 اذَا هَا وَارْمَى مِنْ رِمَاهَا بِمَنْكِبٍ

Kazi Reza Husain, Moulvi Mohamed Hassan, and my father, constitute a noble trio. They were true friends, and their friendship was marked with true love and devotion to each other, and was tested by every possible variation of good and evil fortune. Animated by one common desire—the social, moral, and intellectual amelioration of their co-religionists—they worked together with perfect harmony and earnest zeal, and achieved substantial results. Kazi Reza and Moulvi Mohamed Hassan were constant visitors at our house, and twice a week, at least, did I see them. I can recall the zeal, the earnestness, the enthusiasm with which they discussed questions affecting the interest of the Mohamedans. Not to speak of a number of Muslim students whom they educated at their own expense, they successfully combated that unreasoning and unreasonable Orthodoxy which regarded with distrust and suspicion the spread of English education. It was they who first lighted the lamp of learning in Behar, and though it still burns but dimly there, yet in process of time, we doubt not, it will shine with its wonted brilliance.

In spite of a very large and extensive practice my father never neglected his studies. Immediately on returning from court he dined, and after resting for an hour or so he would retire to his library, which, in earlier days, was in our dwelling-house. There he would generally be, either reading or writing notes on books, or conversing with visitors on subjects religious and historical. On no account would he see clients after sunset, or attend to professional work. Surrounded by his books he was, for those few hours, absolutely happy and cheerful. In that Eden of bliss there was no room for the cold, calculating cares of life, or the disquieting anxieties of the lengthening chain of existence. His love of letters and learning enabled him to find in the pursuit of knowledge a relief from anxiety and a solace under disappointments. Hafiz and Mowlana Rūm were his inseparable companions, and he read them every day with almost religious regularity. He was a better Persian than Arabic scholar, though his knowledge of Arabic was by no means contemptible. He was perfectly at home with the whole range of Persian literature, and stupendous and encyclopaedic was his memory. He could recite Arabic and Persian poetry for hours, and, what is so rare in India, he could write Persian with almost the ease and elegance of a native. There are passages in his *Mahbub-ul-Lubāb* which would be accepted by competent critics as the high-water mark of Persian prose. *Mahbub-ul-Lubāb* is a descriptive catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in his library. It extends over 500 pages, and gives the lives of the authors, with an exhaustive critical

analysis of their works. It involved immense labour, and my father was justly proud of his performance. Owing to a variety of causes, the foremost of them being his departure to Hyderabad Deccan, he was unable to complete it.

An accomplished Arabic and Persian scholar, he was by no means unacquainted with English literature. Among English poets he admired Byron most, but he was not insensible to the lyrical intensity of Shelley, the fascinating elegance of Keats, the sweet reasonableness of Wordsworth, the ineffable charms of Tennyson, and the robust manliness, mingled with a dash of scepticism, of Swinburne, whom he likened to Qa'ni—both supreme and matchless in their fine and forcible diction. For Gibbon he had an unbounded admiration, and almost the whole of the chapter on the "Rise of Islam" he committed to memory.

The language of Gibbon had a fascinating hold upon his mind, and Gibbon's sympathetic treatment of Islam and its heroes could not fail to appeal to a Muslim. As a boy I remember learning by heart passages from the "Roman Empire," selected by my father.

We read together Mill's "Autobiography," Goethe's "Truth and Poetry" (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*), and the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini; and he was never weary of imposing upon me the lesson drawn from the lives of these great masters. He considered biographies as the most instructive of all studies, and used to refer to Goethe's preface to "Truth and Poetry," where the great sage of Weimar says: "For

this seems to be the main object of biography, to exhibit the man in relation to the features of his time, and to show to what extent they have opposed or favoured his progress; what view of mankind and the world he has formed from them, and how far he himself, if an artist, poet, or author, may externally reflect them. But for this is required what is scarcely attainable—namely, that the individual should know himself and his age—himself so far as he has remained the same under all circumstances; his age, as that which carries along with it, determines and fashions both the willing and the unwilling, so that one may venture to pronounce that any person born ten years earlier or later would have been quite a different being both as regards his own culture and his influence on others." Thus it is that the study of biographies and autobiographies written by great masters yields the richest harvest. They trace the gradual evolution of the minds of great men, and serve to exercise a healthy and stimulating influence on others. He found an inexhaustible source of pleasure in the noble lines of Wordsworth:

"There is one great society alone on earth,
The noble living and the noble dead,"

and in the immortal couplet of the poet Mutanabbi:

اعز مکان فی الدنا سراج سابق و خبر جلیس فی الزمان کتاب

He impressed upon me, in season and out of season, that life would not be worth living were it not for intellectual pursuits, and as Goethe says: "It is the pious wish of all fathers to see what they have

themselves failed to attain realized in their sons, as if in this way they could live their lives over again, and at last make a proper use of their early experience." He advised me, on the eve of my departure for England, to study French and German, and recommended me to write a history of Islam from the standpoint of a Muslim. He regretted the spirit in which the life of the Prophet and the history of Islam were treated by European writers, and he was firmly persuaded that it was almost impossible for Western writers to do full justice to, or to handle, either of these subjects in a dispassionate spirit. The East and the West, he thought, were as widely apart from each other as they could be. Eastern thoughts and Eastern traditions, Eastern ideals and Eastern sentiments, were so utterly different, and even opposed to the Western current of thought, that it was perhaps a hopeless task for a European really to enter into or fully realize the feelings and sentiments of the Oriental. Moreover, the strong hold which religion has over the people in Eastern countries is something quite foreign and inexplicable to a European; and its dominating sway over the minutest details of their life is something inconceivable and enigmatical to him. While religion is no more than a social function in the West, in the East it is the very essence of life. In this I am entirely disposed to agree with my father, and I ascribe the failure of European writers in comprehending the character of the Prophet and the phenomenal success of the Islam to a complete misconception of the Eastern character and Eastern sentiments. Very truly does Bagehot

say: "National character is a deep thing—a shy thing; you cannot exhibit much of it to people who have a difficulty in understanding your language; you are in strange society, and you feel you will not be understood." "Let an English gentlemen," writes Thackeray, "who has dwelt two or four or ten years in Paris, say at the end of any given period, how much he knows of French society, how many French houses he has entered, and how many French friends he has made. Intimacy there is none; we see but the outside of the people. Year by year we live in France, and grow grey and see no more. We play écarté with Monsieur de Tréfle every night; but what do we know of the heart of the man—of the inward ways, thoughts, and customs of Tréfle? We have danced with Countess Flicflac, Tuesdays and Thursdays, ever since the peace; and how far are we advanced in her acquaintance since we first twirled her round a room? We know her velvet gown and her diamonds; we know her smiles and her simpers and her rouge, but the real rougeless, *intime* Flicflac we know not."*

If this is the case—and undoubtedly it is so—between such close neighbours as the English and the French, we need not marvel at the inability of the Western writers rightly to understand that strange and complex quantity—Oriental character—which they can neither intelligibly interpret their life nor with any reasonable accuracy expound their history. It was the intensity of religious belief alone, unalloyed by baser considerations, which was the

* Bagehot, "Literary Studies," vol. ii., pp. 44, 45.

real propelling force of the life of the Prophet, and it would be an error to ascribe his actions, as it has been done, to motives other than religious. We often read of certain measures of the Prophet attributed to political foresight and reasons of statesmanship, but neither politics nor statescraft had any meaning or significance in those days of sweet simplicity.

The error lies in introducing preconceived notions into the study of the history of those times, and it is singular that even so careful and circumspect a writer as Von Kremer ascribes the conversion of the Arabs mainly to their love of money and the boundless prospect of booty which the early militant Islam offered to them, and equally singular is it that so sound and thorough a scholar as Dr. Goldziher seriously argues from the similarity between certain Muslim traditions and Biblical passages that the former were necessarily borrowed from the latter.*

Were I to discuss this subject here I would be taken far afield, and I therefore leave it for a more seasonable occasion.

Though my father could not, for one moment, sympathize with religious bigotry and intolerance, he was yet a Muslim through and through. For the Prophet and his family he entertained the most devout reverence, and to the last he never missed the five daily prayers. After the morning prayer he

* "It has been the fashion," says Deutsch, "to ascribe whatever is good in Islam to Christianity. We fear this theory is not compatible with the results of honest investigation. For of Arabian Christianity, at the time of Mohamed, the less said, perhaps, the better. By the side of it even modern Amharic Christianity, of which we possess such astounding accounts, appears pure and exalted."

would regularly read the Qur'an for half an hour, and a magnificent copy of the Qur'an was one of the gifts which I received from him on the eve of my departure for England. On the fly-leaf he wrote:

قرآن مجید زاد اللہ شرف و عظمتہ بہ فرزند ارجمند
 مدد صالح الدین مدد عمرہ بروز روائی و ریاست بعض تلاوت
 فرزند خلیل ز دبیر بخشیدم - خداوند عالی سے برکت ائین
 سعف شریف فرزند مدد عمرہ را در امن خود نگاہ دارد
 و اسلامتی ایمان فائز المرام بایں حسیر - الحف سازد - حرر
 خدا بخش عقی عنده
 المقوم تاریخ ۱۴۲۳ اپریل سنہ ع

With rapturous enthusiasm did he always quote the following Ruba'i:

ای مطلع افتتاب ذات احدي
 صبح ارسي چران شام ابدی
 کس نیست هجر تو دستگیر مارا
 یا ختم رسی خذ سیدی خذ بیدی

On the 10th of Mohurrum my father never allowed us children to see the Mohurrum procession, which he regarded as a mockery and travesty of religion, and for which he never found language sufficiently condemnatory. He thought it wicked to a degree to convert the anniversary of one of the greatest tragedies in the history of Islam into a day of carnival and festivity, instead of observing it scrupulously as one of veritable mourning; and perhaps it would surprise

the reader to know that up to now I have not seen the Patna Mohurrum procession which, I am told, is almost unique in grandeur and magnificence. On the anniversary of that terrible day he occupied himself in the study of the Qur'an and other religious books.

It was one of his deepest regrets that he could never visit the two holy cities of Mekka and Medina. Here I may mention an instance of my father's extreme religious tolerance. In 1894, when I returned home from England for the summer vacation, I often had discussions with him on religious subjects, and he found fault with my views as being somewhat unorthodox, but he never lost his temper or showed the least sign of displeasure. On the contrary, he purchased for me Sir William Muir's "Life of Mohamed," Koelle's "Life of Mohamed," and Dodd's "Buddha, Christ, and Mohamed," books by no means favourable to the Prophet; but at the same time, he asked me to study the other side of the question as well before making up my mind one way or the other. Among Muslim authors whom he suggested that I should study, he laid special stress on the following: Ibn Hisham, the Shifa of Kadhi Iyadh, Kitab-ul-Wasila of Mulla (a unique manuscript in our library); Zad-ul-Ma'ad of Ibn Qayim (another rare manuscript in our library); and the collection of Muslim traditions which, he said, reveal the inner life of the Prophet, his intense religious conviction, his glorious self-sacrifice, his stoical firmness in defeat, his magnanimity in victory, his simple and unostentatious life, the entire absence of pride, ambition, arrogance and vindictiveness from his character, and his passion-

ate devotion and loving fondness for his followers. Moreover, in Islam he found a religion which set before its followers an ideal neither too difficult to attain, nor at the same time impossible to realize. In it he saw not merely "a name of perfection," but a religion which might *scrupulously* be followed without renoumeeing the duties and responsibilities of the world. But with all his attachment to Islam he was not one of those who relegated the professors of other religions to eternal damnation. He could not conceive that God, whom we are taught to believe as just, loving, and merciful, would commit the major portion of mankind to the everlasting torments of hell-fire because they happen to hold a different creed or to worship Him in some manner other than the one prescribed by Islam, and often would he quote in support of his view the noble utterances of Sana'i, Dard, and Ghalib:

سچن کز بہر دسیں گوئیں جو، صورتی چہ سربانی
مکان کز بہر حق جوئی چہ جابقاً چہ جابسا

شمع کعبہ ہو کیے پیوچھا دم کنشت دلمن ہو
درد مسازل ایک تھی شک راد ہی کا پیمنا

رفادرای بشرط استواری اعل ایمان ہے
مرے بت خالہ مین تو نعمہ مین ڈڑو برہمن کو

His whole view of life was deeply coloured by religion. Resignation to the will of God was his

watchword, and never was his faith shaken, however bitter the trial, however acute the suffering. He never worried about the mystery of pain, of evil, of the future life, of the brevity of existence. For these he did not go to philosophy to seek a solution, but to religion; and there he found all that was necessary to give him inward wealth and joy and sweet content. "Whatever is, is right," was his philosophy of life, and he took joys and successes, sorrows, misfortunes, and bereavements with a cool head and a calm fortitude; in other words, he always preserved a temper "cool in arduous and reasonable in prosperous circumstances."

The guiding principle of his conduct towards others might well be summed up in the language of Thackeray: "Be gentle with those who are less lucky, if not more deserving. Think what right have you to be scornful, whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire." Oft did I hear him recite the couplet of Zauq :

دُنْيَا نَوْقِ كَسْكُوْ جَنْمِ حَقَارَتْ سَے دِيْكَبْهَنْ
~ بَـ هَم سَے هَمِينْ زِيدَ كَوْئِي هَم سَے كَم نَهِينْ

Nothing excited his emotion or stirred his compassion more than the sight of poverty, and he frequently told me that he could not understand the strange dispensation of Providence under which some were rolling in wealth and others grovelling in absolute penury. But this observation was invariably qualified

by his remark that "He knoweth his ways best." To the poor and the suffering he never grudged help if it lay in his power, and I well remember some years ago the visit of a friend of his youth who was in sore distress. The man was too proud to beg, and he brought with him a manuscript which he wanted to sell to my father, and the only reason for the sale that he assigned was his immediate want of money. My father looked at the manuscript and told him that he had better copies in his possession. (I believe it was a copy of either Sadi or Jami's works.) He then returned the book to him, and with it a hundred-rupee note. He believed in the brotherhood of humanity, and never suffered religion to be a barrier to a genuine friendship or intimate social intercourse. Religion, he thought, was a matter between man and his God, and a thing too sacred and too holy to be dragged into the details of life. On more than one occasion he allayed passions and smoothed difficulties between Hindus and Mohamedans, and in 1893 he took a prominent part in bringing that hateful cow-killing question—the fruitful source of so many disturbances in India—to a happy and peaceful settlement. It was on that occasion that Sir Antony Macdonell, the then Lieutenant-Governor, addressed to him a letter, a copy of which I give below :

"LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S CAMP,
"BENGAL,

"DEAR KHAN BAHADUR,

"August 7, 1893.

"I thank you for your letter of the 3rd instant, and for the valued and loyal promise of your assistance in removing the feelings of irritation which here

and there have arisen between Mohamedans and Hindus in connection with the slaughter of cows. I think that there has been some misapprehension of the meaning of the Maharajah of Durbhangā. His wish and object, he assures me, was not to make any imputations, which, in the circumstances in which he spoke, would be altogether out of place, but to indicate the points on which friction might possibly occur between Hindus and Mohamedans, and so, by anticipation, to guard against its occurrence. This explanation will, I am sure, be accepted by Mohamedans and others in the conciliatory spirit in which it has been offered to me. Please convey to your many Mohamedan friends my best thanks for the marked courtesy and friendliness with which they received me at Patna, and believe me to be,

“ Yours sincerely,
“ A. P. MACDONELL.”

My father was wont to say that he had a strain of Brahmin blood in him, and throughout his life he showed a pronounced partiality towards the Hindus, among whom were some of his best and devoted friends. The story runs thus: My grandfather, as an infant, was suckled by a Brahmin lady, and out of deference to the memory of his foster-mother neither my father nor my grandfather ever took beef; and this family scruple and family prejudice against cow's flesh has continued unchanged.

My father was of an essentially didactic turn of mind, and he would often tell me that he considered nothing a greater sin than to wound the feelings of

others, or "to blend our pleasure or our pride with the sorrows of the meanest thing that feels"; and these occasional sermons were constantly wound up either with the charming Qat'a of Imad or the equally charming lines of Sawda or Rasikh :

بـرـلـوحـ جـانـ نـوـشـتـهـ اـمـ اـزـ گـفـتـهـ بـدرـ
 رـوـزـ اـزـلـ کـهـ تـرـبـتـ اوـ بـادـ عـمـبرـینـ
 گـفـتـ اـلـ پـسـرـ بـصـحـبـتـ اـفـادـ گـرـسـیـ
 شـوـخـیـ مـکـنـ بـچـشمـ حـتـارـتـ دـرـوـ مـبـیـنـ
 بـرـ شـیـرـ اـزانـ شـدـنـدـ بـزـرـگـانـ دـبـیـنـ سـوـارـ
 کـاـهـسـتـدـ تـرـزـ وـرـ گـذـشـتـنـدـ بـزـرـمـ مـیـنـ
 گـرـدـرـ جـهـانـ دـلـیـ زـتـوـ خـرـمـ نـمـیـ شـودـ
 بـارـ چـهـانـ مـکـنـ کـنـدـ شـدـ خـاطـرـیـ حـزـینـ
 يـارـیـ بـجـزـ خـدـاـ نـتـوـانـ خـوـاستـنـ عـمـادـ
 يـهـ مـسـتـدـمـانـ نـمـوـكـ اـیـاـکـ نـسـتـعـیـنـ

کـعبـہـ گـیـاـ جـوـ ٹـوـٹـ توـکـنـاـ جـاءـ غـمـ هـےـ شـیـخـ
 یـہـ مـسـرـدـلـ نـبـیـنـ کـہـ بـنـیـاـنـ جـائـیـاـ

جوـھـیـ تـمـبـرـدـ تـوـشـ عـنـاـمـ * سـوـھـےـ ٹـوـٹـےـ هـوـئـےـ دـلـ هـیـ کـاـ مـقـیـمـ

IV

Marked with a sanity of judgment and a clarity of vision were his views alike regarding religion and politics. He took a liberal and extended view of

religion—a practical view of politics. He was firmly persuaded that English rule was an unqualified blessing for India, and that its withdrawal would at once evoke the undying passions of opposing creeds and all the smouldering ambitions of the warlike races. In other words India without the English would become the theatre of the wildest anarchy and the scene of the most unspeakable horrors. He admired the English sense of duty, which shirked no danger and feared no obstacle, and he always told me that it was his rarest privilege to count among his friends some of the great Anglo-Indians who have served the Indian Empire. Nor was this feeling one-sided. His English friends had a genuine regard for him, and always showed him the greatest consideration. They appreciated his disinterested and public-spirited action in giving to the public his magnificent collection of books and the enormous self-sacrifice that it involved. Mr. Duke (so well known for his uniform kindness to, and sympathy with, Indians) wrote to me (on my father's death) : "He was a unique character whom it was a privilege to know, and certainly his labours raised, during his lifetime, what will now be a magnificent monument to him." This tribute, coming as it does from one of the most responsible officers of the Bengal Government, amply shows the esteem in which my father was held in official circles. I do not propose here to discuss this subject at length, as a number of my father's friends are still in high office, and a sense of delicacy prevents me from referring to their relations with him. This portion of his life may, therefore, with advantage, be withheld for

a more seasonable occasion. It was his deep-rooted conviction that India, at this stage of her career, stood in the greatest need of social reform, and he regretted the enormous waste of energy on the part of the so-called "politicians," and the itinerant preachers of Swaraj and boycott, who, he thought, were doing positive harm to the country. He believed that the time was not yet ripe for India to meddle with politics, and half a dozen fluent and facile orators could not give to "the three hundred millions whom the Imperial Sceptre sways" that political turn of mind which, for its formation, requires centuries of discipline and training, and which can alone create unity of action and unity of purpose. India, with her numerous communities, each looking askance at the other, with an intensity that had its roots founded in deep differentiations of character, faculty, and condition, was hardly prepared yet to embark on a political mission, and it was criminal folly to establish secret societies and to have recourse to the dagger of the assassin. Such are not the methods by which he thought India could realize her legitimate ambition or the Indians their legitimate rights. These would serve merely to retard progress by creating a feeling of suspicion and distrust on the part of our rulers. He always admired the patience and forbearance, the self-restraint and self-control which those at the helm of the State display under most trying and irritating circumstances; and he pointed to the action of the Indian Government in connection with the recent bomb outrages and the discovery of a secret anarchical society as a signal proof of the English sense of justice.

and equity. He never, however, for one moment, doubted that the country as a whole was loyal to the core, and regarded the mad melodrama enacted in Bengal as the outcome of temporary brain-storm and diseased fancy. He held firmly by constitutional principles, and though he did not consider that our Government is perfect or flawless (that no government is), he yet had an unbounded faith and confidence in the English character, and was firmly convinced that any grievances properly represented, or any demand honestly made, would meet with the serious attention of the Government. He thought it would do good to the people who talk glibly about Swaraj carefully to study and inwardly to digest Bagehot's "Physics and Politics" and take its lessons seriously to heart.

In the following passage of that remarkable book he found a deep lesson for the overweening politicians of our age:—"What are called in European politics the principles of 1789 are, therefore, inconsistent with the early world: they are fitted only to the new world in which society has gone through its early task; when the inherited organization is already confirmed and fixed; when the soft minds and strong passions of youthful nations are fixed and guided by hard transmitted instincts. Till then not equality before the law is necessary, but inequality, for what is most wanted is an elevated *elite* who know the law; not a good Government seeking the happiness of its subjects, but a dignified and overawing Government getting its subjects to obey; not a good law, but a comprehensive law binding all life to one routine.

Later are the ages of freedom; first are the ages of servitude." The energy expended and the time wasted on political propaganda might profitably be employed both by Hindus and Mohamedans on social reforms and intellectual advancement, without which politics were barren, ineffectual and unavailing. He insisted on the purity of the home,* and regarded

* Extracts from my father's article on طریقہ بروش اطفال published in No. 9, A.H. 132 (Hyderabad Deccan):

لپولین جب سر برآورده ہوا اور تمام فرانس اوسکے تقصیہ میں آیا اور بورب پر بڑا دباؤ اوسکا بڑا اور اوسکا تجھیہ بہت وسیع ہوا اسکا قتل یہ تھا کہ فرانس میں انسوس بچوں کی بروش کے لئے ماٹین نہیں ہیں اس میں کچھے ہٹک نہیں کہ بچوں کی بروش اور انکی نگرانی خصوصاً اُس زمانہ میں کہ جتک وہ پانچ جہے بیس کی عمر کو بچپن ماؤن سے بھر کوئی نہیں کو سکتا اسلئی اسکی شدید خرورت ہے کہ باپ خود نگرانی بچوں کی کرے اور ہمہشہ ہدایت معمول ایزکونکی مان کو اس باپ میں دے - کیونکہ هندوستانیکی بیان عدم تعلیم کی وجہ سے اور نیز پردہ نسلیتی کے باعث سے دنیا سے واقفیت نہیں رکھتیں - ایسی بردہ نسلیں کی کسی فعل کے نتیجہ کو کیا سمجھوئے سکتی ہے جب بچہ دایہ کی گود سے الک ہوتا ہر اسکو عورتوں کے پاس رہنا کیسی طرح جائز نہیں اور ہم هندوستانیوں کے گھر میں ارندیان دنیاں مامانیں مغلانیاں کثرت سے ہیں ہمیشہ والدین کو ایسی کوشش کرنی جاہتی کہ اس فرقے سے لڑکی اور بچے الک رہیں - بعد مکتد بچوں کو مہدیب ایزکونکی صاحبت میں رکھنا جاہتی اور ہمیشہ یہ خیال کرنا جاہتی کہ خانہزاد اور غلام بچوں کے ساتھ نہ رہیں - اور جو طلبہ بچوں کے عموماً مسلمان گھروں میں دستیر ہے انکی وضع کی بھی نگرانی کریں ہمیشہ ایسے اسداویں میں ایزکونکو دینا جاہتی کہ خوش امواری اور اخلاق حمیدہ انکے بڑھیں - اور مادرسوں کا یہ ایک فرض منصی ہونا جاہتی * حضرات ایک انگریز قول یہ ہے کہ اگر کوئی اپنے بچوں کے اخلاق درست کیا جا ہے تو پہلے اپنے اخلاق درست کرے - انسوس ہے کہ مائین تو تعلیم یا قاتھ میں ہی نہیں کہ وہ غریب اسکے نکات کو سمجھیں باقی رہے بچوں کے باپ وہ ان اقسام کے لوگ ہیں دراہمند نوکری پیشہ - تجارت پیشہ یا مزدور دباغتمندوں کو هندوستان کے اپنے بچوں کی تعلیم کی طرف توجہ نہیں - ہر شہر اپنے گریبان میں مرد الکر خود اپنے اطوار کو دیکھے سکتا ہے اور ناظرین اسکو خود خوب خیال نہ ماسکتے ہیں - وہ غریب بچے چھوٹے تے آنکھے کھلتے ہی باپ کا سامان عیش و عشرت دیکھا فرمائی اوسکا جی پڑھتے لمحہ میں کوئنکار لکھ سکتا ہے اوس نے تو پہلے سماجھلیا کہ دنیا میں یہی جیز ہے ورنہ ہمارا باپ کیون کرنا - بچوں کا دل ملنے صفات کا غذہ کی ہے اوس پر جذبے نشان بڑیں گے وہ نقش كالحاچیر ہو جانیگے پس لزم ہے کہ

character as of greater moment than a University degree. Honesty, straightforwardness, self-respect, self-reliance, respect for womanhood, regard for religion, fellow-feeling, and mutual toleration—these are the qualities, he would frequently say, the Indians must possess before they can hope to rise or reasonably call for self-government. With the Swadeshi movement—namely, the movement which aims at reviving the faded industries and forgotten arts and crafts of India, he was in perfect sympathy, but he had nothing but unmixed contempt for a movement which, under cover of promoting native industries, avowedly has for its end and aim the excitement of racial jealousy and racial hatred. He never attached any importance or gave a second thought to the wild

باب اپنے اطوار کی اصلاح کرے اگر یہ جاہنا ہو کہ بیٹا معقول اور خوش وضع ہو - باخترین معاف فرمائیں گے یہ ایک مرے سامنے کا واقعہ ہے کہ جس میں ناظرین خیال کریں گے کہ بارگے انفال آئندہ دل بر جو نکے وساہی جاگز بیں ہوتی ہیں جیسا فتو کی تعریف کاغذ بر اُتری ہے - میں انفاق سے ایک رفیس کی ملاقات کو حاضر ہوا - میں نے دیکھا کہ جند مصاحب جمع ہیں اور نہیں حقے اور ایک ارباب نشاط میں سے جو وجہیہ الصورت تھی وہاں بیٹھیں ہے - مجھے میں لونسی ایک مقدمہ کی بارے میں باتیں ہوتے لگیں - ایک صاحب نے آکر ان سے عرض کیا کہ صاحبزادے کے پاس ایک زن بازاری بیٹھی ہوتی ہے وہ نہایت خط میں آئے کہڑے ہو گئے اور فرمائے لگئے کہ لاتھی لاو - غرش لاتھی آئی میں بھی کھڑا ہو گیا - اور میں نے انکا ہاتھ، تمام کریہ بوجھا کر جناب اس لاتھی سے آب کیسے مارنے جانے ہیں اوس زن بازاری کو یا صاحبزادے کو - اس بروہ کچھے متأمل ہوئے - تو میں نے انکی جسمت میں عرض کیا کہ یہلے جناب اس لاتھی سے اس زن بازاری کو جو آبکی صحبت میں بیٹھی ہے مار کر نکالنے اوسکے بعد بھی کسی رحمت کے وہ زن بازاری جو مجلس میں آکے صاحبزادیکے ہے خود جلی جانیگی - انسوستاک حالت یہ ہے کہ ہمارے فرقہ اسلام میں دو چیزیں ضروری ہیں اول اور نواہی انکا حال بقول غالب بھی ہو گیا * بیت *

لَا تَقْرِبُوا الصَّلَاةَ زَنْبِيمْ بِخَاطِرَاسْ * وَ زَانِرِيادْ مَانِدْ كُلُواً وَ أَشْرِيواً مِنْ

ار باب بصیرت کی خدمت میں صرف امیدِ تعالیٰ ہے کہ جب اجمیعی حالت مسلمانوں کی ایسی ہو گئی ہے تو کون سی توقع ہے کہ اُس قوم کے بھے اچھی تعلیم پانیں گے اور سہ آورده نکلیں گے *

excesses recently perpetrated in Bengal, but, at the same time, he believed that throughout the country there existed a general feeling that the claims of the people were not fully considered, nor their wishes always consulted.

He did not, however, believe that a wave of discontent or disloyalty was passing over the country, or that there was any genuine or widespread unrest among the people, but he apprehended that if the misunderstanding between Government and people were to continue long unremoved, difficulties might arise in the remote if not near future. He took a lively interest in the Russo-Japanese War, and in his letter of November 1, 1906, he writes to me: "My house is a solitary confinement in holidays, and I regret to say that the first volume of the Russo-Japanese War which I have been reading is now over." He did not, like some writers, ascribe the new phase of thought to the victories of Japan, but mainly to the growth of education among the people. India has been suddenly drawn into the main current of European thought, and the influence of European civilization has had a pronounced and decisive influence over her. English is universally studied out here, even to the neglect and exclusion of Arabic and Sanskrit. People have suddenly risen from their long slumber, and see before them the dazzling brilliance of European civilization, and the majestic march of democratic ideas. This being the position of affairs, educated Indians, secretly if not openly, resent the social distinctions and social disabilities which divide them from their rulers. They naturally

crave, so he thought, for a share in shaping the policy of the Government, and a fair representation in the higher offices of the State. True, this feeling is yet confined to a narrow and limited class of educated men; but decade by decade education is fast increasing, and is penetrating larger and larger areas. It was here, more than anywhere else, that my father saw a source of danger alike to the people and the Government. Nevertheless, he hoped that as time went by Government would make greater concessions and allow greater privileges to the people than it is, at present, prepared to concede.

Keenly alive as he was to the incalculable advantages which have flowed from British rule in India—namely, the enlargement of the intellectual outlook, the impetus to trade and commerce, the general and widespread prosperity of the country and the people, a universal sense of security of person and property, the growth of civic life and its necessary concomitants, the unmistakable progress towards the recognition of the rights and status of women—with all these cheering and cheerful results which promise still brighter prospects for the future, he was, at the same time, not insensible to the destructive results of European influence.

Of such results he found the most clear and cogent evidence in two directions: firstly, on the religious, and secondly, on the social systems of the Indians.*

* I shall here quote from my article on "The Mohamedan Awakening," published in the *Empire* of November 15 and 22, 1906: "Misconceived ideas of Islam prevented the Mohamedans from applying themselves to the study of English. This prejudice against it continued for some time after the Mutiny. It was

Western influence has made a vigorous assault on the religions of India, notably on Hinduism. It has shaken the middle-class Hinduism to its deepest foundations. It has unsettled the belief of the par-

reserved for Sir Syed Ahmed to bring home to the Mohamedans the utter folly of the position they had taken up. He pointed out to them, in season and out of season, the blazing indiscretion which was wrecking their career as a people. He met with opposition, and was cried down as a setter forth of strange things; but he continued to preach, and eventually succeeded in bringing round his people to his own mode of thought. The political life of the Mohamedans could only be saved from extinction, so thought Sir Syed, by participating in, and not discarding, Western education and Western culture. To plant his teaching on a permanent and abiding basis, he established the Aligarh College. Here were the two streams of Eastern and Western culture to meet, and unite and broaden into a mighty channel for the general benefit of his people. The result has completely justified his hopes and wishes, and at Aligarh we have the most harmonious blending of European and Eastern education. If Sir Syed was the premier advocate and founder of Muslim education on modern lines, he was also the first in India to remove the crust of superstition and bigotry, with its thousand incidents, which overlaid and disfigured the original simplicity of Islam. A new life was poured into Islam, and Sir Syed must be regarded and reckoned as one of the apostles of our age. The impulse which he has given to modern education, and the interpretation which he has put upon Islam and its tenets, have borne a rich harvest. The narrow and straight-laced doctrines of the doctors and divines were scattered to the winds, and a new era set in, the watchword of which was reform in all directions—reform in social life, reform in religion—and advance in matters intellectual. The upward march is always slow, but even the least reflective of observers would scarcely fail to notice that there is an appreciable advance towards progress. Nor are the Mohamedans insensible now of their political position. This, indeed, is only natural. With education come political hopes, ambitions, and aspirations. They have rightly refrained, so far, from adopting methods of political agitation with which of late we have become only too familiar. But that is due mainly to their belief that conciliatory steps and respectful requests are more profitable and effective than clamorous speeches and seditious advocacy. In the interest of

tially educated classes, without substituting anything in its place. Nor has it failed to leaven Islam. To this influence did he ascribe the growing religious scepticism, agnosticism, and even atheism in educated

both the Government and our Mohamedan fellow-subjects, we hope that this feeling of trust and confidence on the one hand, and help and sympathy on the other, will continue without a break.

"Notable, indeed, is the spirit in which modern Mohamedan writers have addressed themselves to the task of writing history. We, of course, expect modern treatment of history from Mr. Ameer Ali, who is abreast of modern culture and has had the advantage of an English education, and whose historical works might be favourably compared with works of recognized European historians. But the modern spirit, so to speak, is in the air, and is not confined to men who have been to Europe, or have received their training at European or English Universities. We have got, indeed, Mohamedan historians who have never set foot on European soil saturated with the same spirit. This fact, to be sure, can only be accounted for by the influence of European, or rather English, education, which has been steadily gaining ground here, and which has been affecting all classes and conditions of men. In Professor Shibli, who might be called a disciple of Sir Syed, we have the triumph of modern historical method. Though ill-acquainted with English, Professor Shibli is in line with modern historical criticism. He has opened a new vein in Indian historical criticism, and his canons of historical criticism would be accepted without demur or hesitation even by the Regius Professor of History at Oxford. It scarcely admits of a doubt that the new Indian historical literature is the direct outcome of English influence. Professor Shibli may be regarded as the founder of the historical school in India. He has lighted the torch, and it is he who has handed it on to others—men like Moulvie Chirag Ali and Moulvie Abdur Razzaq. Moulvie Chirag Ali deserves more than a passing notice. He has written two books of great excellence and great merit—'A Critical Exposition of the Jehad' and 'Reforms under Muslim Rule.' In the latter he discusses with much learning and breadth of view the weak points of the Islamic Government, and advocates certain reforms which he considers imperative for the salvation and preservation of Mohamedans as a community. This work exemplifies, indeed, the spirit of compromise, and shows the extent to which it is prepared to go. The burden of the book is to prove to his

circles. But he considered it as a mere passing phase, to be followed by the return of an orthodoxy of a perhaps more reasonable and permanent character.

Western influence upon the Indian social system appeared to my father of a more durable character. It has completely transformed the domestic life of educated India, and is steadily undermining the basis of Eastern family life. The Eastern family, unlike the Western, includes all the descendants of one common ancestor. Bound by the tie of kinship, in most cases they live together under the tender care

co-religionists the necessity of moving with the age in which they are living. He urges them to consider whether institutions thirteen hundred years old can be accepted in their entirety without change or modification. He points out the enormous changes through which Mohamedans have passed, and advocates that, circumstances having changed, they must needs modify, alter, or even do away with institutions which are no longer in harmony with existing conditions and requirements. No sane person will deny the soundness of this proposition, but for our purposes we need only note that such views are clear indications of the changes that have come over the tone and temper of the Mohamedan community. But if the study of history has, under English influence, been placed upon a modern basis, we cannot fail to trace English influence in the rich crop of novels that have appeared in the Urdu language. True, these novels contain no shrewd criticisms of life, nor do they deal with the various and varying shades of human character. They do not possess cleverness of design nor mastery of finish; but we should not forget that this art is still in its infancy, and has a future before it. These are, indeed, infallible signs of a new age which is dawning upon the Mohamedans. It is an age of silent revolution, in which old habits are shaken, old views overthrown, ancient assumptions rudely questioned, and ancient inferences utterly denied. The result is an impatient anxiety to put an end to the slavish devotion of the past, which so far stifled growth, and destroyed that adaptability to changing circumstances which is the condition precedent of progress and success."

of the head of the family, who is usually its oldest member and is invested with Patria Potestas, short of the power of life or death possessed by the Roman father. He decides disputes, enforces discipline, and his command has the force of law. He is the sole custodian of the family honour and prestige, and he is the one to whom the members of the family look up for help and guidance. A strong tendency towards decentralization has set in, and it is too glaring to be mistaken or missed. Whether it will lead to results—good or bad—it is, indeed, premature to predict; but one thing is certain—this most charming feature of Oriental life cannot last long.

Further, the introduction of the competitive system appeared to him largely responsible for the decline and decay of the old Hindu and Mohamedan aristocratic families. While it has brought men of very indifferent birth and position in life to the forefront, and has secured for them high stations in Government employ, it has left the cream and flower of the Indians to wither away unprotected and unprovided for. They find it hopeless successfully to compete in examinations with the Novi Homines; with the result that they must end their days either as Sub-Inspectors of Police, or, if they are fortunate enough, as Registrars in some remote and outlying districts of Behar or Bengal. My father never attached much importance to examinations; nor did he believe that mere book-learning was a safe guarantee for the qualities needed to make either a good judicial or executive officer. It required, he thought, many generations to breed high qualities of the mind or body, and if the Government seriously

gave a trial to the scions of old Hindu and Mohamedan families it would find in them men not merely thoroughly competent to discharge their duties, but scrupulously honest, strictly impartial, severely just, and eminently fitted for any duties that might be entrusted to them. He frequently referred, as instances, to the old subordinate judges who, though they wrote judgments in Persian, yet possessed a remarkable insight, and a rare knowledge of law and human life, and whose decisions not even their Lordships of the Privy Council felt inclined to disturb or vary. These men were not crammers, who by sheer dint of memory had passed examinations, but were descendants of the old Hindu and Mohamedan families, and as such commanded and fully justified the respect and confidence reposed in them by the public. The admission of such men, in larger numbers, would at once raise the tone of the public service, and impress upon it a character which the sons of weavers, petty tradesmen, and the like, could scarcely hope to impart to it. Often did my father say: "Where would Sir Salar Jung, Sir Syed Ahmed, and Mohsin-ul-Mulk be if examinations alone were the test of statesmanship or of high judicial and executive qualities?"

V

I now pass on to the history of the Bankipore Oriental Library, which is the greatest achievement of my father's life, and upon which must rest his title to fame and his claims upon the gratitude of the literary world. My grandfather was essentially a man

of letters,* and he spent the greater portion of his income in purchasing manuscripts which, at the time of his death, in 1876, numbered 1,400. "On his death-bed my father [writes the founder in his article on the Islamic Libraries] entrusted them to me, and asked me to convert his library into a public library for the use of the community whenever I should find myself in a position to do so." My father never forgot this pious trust, and since 1876 his one constant endeavour was to carry it out. By his sketch of my father's life, published in the September number of the *Modern Review*, Professor Jadunath Sircar has forestalled me, and I shall here quote some of the romantic incidents connected with the library which the Professor has so admirably described in his article. "There are

* My grandfather (1815-1876) was an excellent Persian and Arabic scholar, and his Bayadh, which I hope to publish shortly, shows at once his wide reading and sound judgment. The Bayadh contains selections from Persian poets, and covers the whole range of Persian poetry from the earliest times down to Ghalib, his contemporary. He himself occasionally composed verses, which were mostly religious. His poem on our saint Shaikh Mohiuddin Jilani I place here below :

بجال خویش تنگم یامحی الدین جیلانی * نگاهی از کرم سوے من اه محبوب مجاہانی
 بود سلطان و سید خواجه و مخدوم القابت * بود در خلائق نامت قنبل عالم غوث صمدانی
 غریب و شجاع و مولانا ولی درویش و هم شاهی * که برقد تو می زید اباس اعظم الشانی
 بحسن خلق چون احمد علی سیرت حسن بانی * بخوبی چون حسین و در صباحت یوسف ثانی
 رخش تنسیرو الشمس و دلش شرح الـ نشرح * تو دستش دستگیر خلق و نامت سرو ایمانی
 همه موجود عالم حلقة درگوش آند بیش تو * که دارد نام تو خاصیت مهر سلیمانی
 غلامی از غلامانت گدای از گدایانست * منم محتاج محتاجان تو شاهنشاه شاهانی
 ملاجی کن مرا اه در اب تو معافتیز عیسی * که جان من بلسب آمد ز آندوه گران جانی
 ز گرداب غم برکش که هشتی نوح کشی بان * بسیاب حواردت زورق من گشت طوفانی
 و پا آفتاده ام دستم بگیر و سرفرازم کن * که نام نست پیر و دستگیر اه قطب ربانی
 غلام خواجگان چیشم تسلیم پیر من * دلا در شاه صوفی حاجی و مقبول پژوانی

many romances connected with the growth and history of the library. The most precious manuscripts in India were undoubtedly those of the Mogul Library in Delhi. Thither, through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, came all rare and fine specimens of calligraphy and illumination in the East. Some were purchased, others were executed by artists retained in the Imperial service, some were secured by conquest (as of Golconda and Hyderabad in Aurangzib's reign); and many by the confiscation of the goods of great nobles on their death. (On the death of Akbar's poet-laureate, Faizi, his 4,300 volumes were added to the Emperor's library.) Thus was formed the largest library in the East at that period, for while Central Asia, Persia, and Arabia were torn by incessant wars, India enjoyed peace under the Moguls. In the eighteenth century many of these found their way to the library of the Nawabs of Oudh. But the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 brought about the fall of Delhi and Lucknow. The Imperial and Nawabi treasures were dispersed. The Nawab of Rampur (Rohil Khand), who had joined the English, got the best of the *loot*, as he had proclaimed among the victorious sepoys that he would pay one rupee for every manuscript brought to him. Khuda Bukhsh began his collection much later; but there was the greatest rivalry between him and the Nawab. At last Khuda Bukhsh won over from the Nawab's side that jewel of a book-hunter, Mohamed Maqi, an Arab, and paid him a regular salary of Rs. 50 a month, besides commission, for eighteen years, and employed him in searching for rare manuscripts (mostly Arabic) in Syria, Arabia,

Egypt, and Persia (specially Bayrut and Cairo). It was Khuda Bukhsh's invariable practice to pay double railway fare to every manuscript-seller who visited Bankipur. Thus his fame spread throughout India, and he was given the first choice of every manuscript on sale in any part of the country. Curiously enough, one year the library was broken open by a former bookbinder, and some of the best manuscripts stolen. The thief sent them for sale to a broker or merchant at Lahore, and the latter unsuspectingly offered them to Khuda Bukhsh as the likeliest person to buy them. So in the end the honest man came by his own, and the thief was punished. In another case divine justice was secured by a similar roundabout process. Mr. J. B. Elliot (a great book-collector and donor to the Bodleian) borrowed a unique manuscript of the odes of Kamaluddin Ismail Isfahani from Mohamed Bukhsh and afterwards refused to return it, offering a large price for it. The owner indignantly declined but held his peace. When Elliot retired he packed his choicest manuscripts in some cases and shipped them to England, while his worthless books were put in another case and left at Patna to be sold by auction. By the irony of fate or the Will of God, call it what you will, not only the extorted volume of the odes but some other rare manuscripts as well (such as the Majalis-i-Khamsa bearing Shah Jahan's autograph) got into the wrong case, and Mohamed Bukhsh bought them. On reaching England Elliot discovered his mistake, only to fret and fume in vain. One day when Khuda Bukhsh was driving back from the High Court at Hyderabad, his eyes, ever on the lookout for books,

discovered a bundle of volumes on a sack of flour in a grocer's shop. He stopped, turned the books over, and asked the price. The owner shrewdly answered : 'To any other man I should have sold these old and rotten papers for Rs. 3. But as your lordship is interested in them they must contain something of value. I want Rs. 20 for them.' A true guess, for along with some worthless things the bundle contained an old work on Arabic bibliography not to be found elsewhere. Immediately after Khuda Bukhsh's purchase Rs. 400 was offered for it by the Nizam, but in vain." So far Professor Sircar and I vouch for the correctness of these statements. Besides the rare manuscripts with which Mohamed Maqi enriched our library, manuscripts poured in, in torrents, from all parts of India, and my father paid fancy prices for them. As years went by the number of manuscripts increased, and the idea of building a special house for his library laid hold of my father's mind, somewhere in 1886, and he at once commenced work. In 1888 that magnificent building, "a worthy setting for the jewels they contain," was completed, and the books were then removed from our dwelling-house to the building which is now known as the Oriental Library. It was about 1888 that he asked Mr. Campbell, the then opium agent of Patna, and a dear friend of my father, to bring the library to the notice of the Government. What the actual results of Mr. Campbell's negotiations were I am unable to ascertain, but within a year or so Sir Charles Lyall visited the library. An accomplished Arabic scholar, Sir Charles was charmed with the invaluable treasures that he

found there, and since then he has taken a keen and lively interest in the library and its founder. It is impossible for us adequately to convey in words the gratitude which we feel for the many obligations under which that great scholar has laid us, and I am convinced that it was he who first drew the attention of the Bengal Government to the worth and value of the library and induced that Government to become its patron and sponsor. I regret the loss of correspondence between my father and the Bengal Government which preceded the opening ceremony in 1891 by the then Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Charles Elliott, when my father's and grandfather's collection of Oriental manuscripts was opened to the public under the name of Khuda Bukhsh's Oriental Public Library. In 1891 the library contained 4,000 manuscripts, but the number has since then increased, and there are now over 5,000 manuscripts, besides the collection of English books amounting to over 2,500. I may here mention that my father had a peculiar weakness for fine binding. He insisted on his books being excellently bound, and the library can boast of rare specimens not only of Oriental but also of European binding. It were idle to try to convey in a few pages any adequate idea of the imperishable treasures which the library possesses, and I shall not embark upon a task which I consider so hopelessly impossible; but, at the same time, this paper would lose its value if no mention were made of at least some of our literary gems.

Before I make my own observations I shall here quote from my father's article on the Islamic Libraries, published some years ago, in the Nineteenth Century,

and which has become all but unknown : "True it is, indeed, that the Moguls never rose to the same eminence in culture as the Muslims of Baghdad or Cairo or Cordova ; nevertheless, they held themselves up, after their iconoclastic work was done, as the patrons of letters. The descendants of Gengis Khan and grandsons of Tamerlane embraced Islam and encouraged learning. It was under them that Nasiruddin Tusi, Kuthbuddin Shirazi, Saduddin Taftazani, and others flourished. The Mogul dynasty in India likewise extended protection to arts and sciences, and took deep interest in the progress of culture. The Emperor Shahjahan was, indeed, a well-read man and extremely fond of books. The Adil Shahi and Kutub Shahi, Kings of the Deccan, also followed the example of the Mogul princes so far as the encouragement of learning was concerned. In India there existed several well-known libraries, but no traces of these libraries were found after the Mutiny. In those times, of which history has a doleful tale to tell, these libraries were either destroyed or books were taken out of the country. The few that remained in the country were sold at miserably low prices, owing to poverty no less than want of education. Thus, to-day in India, as far as I am aware, there is no library of Oriental books which can stand comparison with the libraries either at Medina or Cairo or Constantinople. I hope I shall not be deemed guilty of want of modesty if I describe the library which I have given to the city of Patna. It is not vanity, but the desire of bringing it to the notice of the Orientalists in Europe, that impels me to mention it in this paper. Though the

library is now under the control of the Government of India, and though every possible precaution which wisdom or foresight can dictate is taken to assure its safety and permanence, still the library is incomplete without a printing press. Let us hope that ere long we shall possess a press to multiply the copies of valuable works, and so bring them within the reach of the reading public. The idea of founding a library long floated before the vision of my father. The greater portion of his income he spent in the collection of manuscripts, which numbered 1,400 at the time of his death in July, 1876. On his death-bed he entrusted these manuscripts to me, and asked me to convert his library for the use of the community whenever I should find myself in a position to do so. I inherited to the fullest extent my father's passion for collecting books, and since his death I have been making large additions to it. In 1891 the library was opened to the public. It then contained nearly 4,000 manuscripts. The number of manuscripts now is over 5,000. The collection of English books, though not very large, is indeed respectable, including nearly all the most important literary and scientific works. The library, further, possesses select manuscripts which formerly belonged to great Orientalists like De Sacy, Sir Gore Ouseley, and Mr. Blochmann of the Calcutta Madrasah, and many, indeed, are the notes in the handwriting of those men.

"I have spoken above of the destruction to which libraries in Muslim countries were constantly liable during the periods of political excitement. In addition to oft-recurring internal dissensions, the ravages of

the Moguls and the fanaticism of the Christians obliterated countless books. Owing to these misfortunes productions of Muslim writers from the second to the seventh century of the Hegira have become exceedingly rare. The Mohamedan books now extant are chiefly the writings of the authors who flourished from the middle of the seventh to the end of the eleventh century of the Hegira. I have succeeded in securing some manuscripts of earlier dates which treat of astronomy, surgery, medicine, metaphysics, and mixed mathematics. Many of the manuscripts are written by the most famous scribes, and are exquisitely done. In the first volume of the catalogue which I have published I have dealt at length with these manuscripts. If time and health permit me I shall soon bring out the second volume. I shall mention a few here as I have a limited space at my disposal. The work of Zahravi on surgery is a manuscript which requires particular attention. This copy bears A.H. 584 as the date of execution. In this manuscript the pictures of the surgical instruments are carefully drawn, and the marvelous similarity which some of the instruments bear to those which are supposed to be of modern invention tempts us to believe that the Muslims of Spain were not entirely unfamiliar with them. There is another old manuscript which it may be worth our while to mention here. It is the work of Dioscorides on medicinal plants, and which was translated by the Arabs during the Caliphate of Harun-ul-Rashid. It is the very manuscript which was once deposited in the charitable dispensary established by Jalaluddin Shirwan Shah in

Shiraz, some 600 years ago. Muslim writers made this book the basis of their future inquiries on medicinal plants, and the library possesses the most important and authoritative works written by Muslims on this subject. Further, this library possesses a very old manuscript of the treatises of Thabit Ibn Kurra and some of the writings of Nasirruddin Farabi and Abdur Rahim Bairuni. I am told by a well-known Orientalist of England that our copy of Nahhas's commentary on the Moallakat is far superior to any that exists in the libraries of Europe.*

* Here is a letter from Sir Charles Lyall, which will be of some interest to our readers. It is dated April 13, 1905 :

"**MY DEAR MOULAVI SAHEB,**

"I have to thank you for your letter received by last mail, and your kind inquiries after my health. By God's blessing, I am very well, though, like all of us, growing older. My family has also been spared the trials of illness, and we are able to take part in life with a quiet mind. I am very busy, partly with official work relating to the affairs of India, which give me plenty of employment, and partly with the preparation of an edition of the Mufaddaliyat المفصلات with the commentary of Al Anbari, a task on which I have now been employed for some time. When the work is printed, I shall take care that a copy is provided to the library at Bankipur. You will find some account of it in a paper which appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in April, 1904. I am returning to the library, duly registered, the very valuable MS. of the commentary of An-Nahhas on the Moallakat, and beg you to accept my hearty thanks for having been allowed to keep it for so long. It is indeed a most valuable MS.—better than any known to me in Europe. I should think, from the character of the writing, that it must date from about the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century Hegira, and it is probably a MS. written in Persia. I have had in my hands for the Mufaddaliyat a MS. dated A.H. 471, which corresponds in a remarkable manner in its style of writing with your MS. of Nahhas, and I think that the two must belong to the same age and country.

"With all good wishes,

"I am, sincerely yours,

"C. J. LYALL."

There are, moreover, manuscripts which used to belong to the Emperors of Delhi: for instance, the poetical work of Mirza Kamran, brother of Humayun, written by Mohamed Ishaq Shabi, was with the Emperors of Delhi from Akbar to Mohamed Shah. This manuscript bears the signatures of Jahangir and Shahjahan. There are other books, too, bearing signatures of Shahjahan, Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan, Kings of the Adil Shahi, and some of the members of the Kutub Shahi family, which are in the library.

"Jahangir, in his autobiography, makes mention of a copy of the Zulaikha, which, from the description given by him, I consider to be identical with the one in the library. This book, according to the estimate of Jahangir, was valued at Rs. 20,000.

"Of poetical works the library possesses over 400 manuscripts; some of them are sumptuously illuminated and magnificently bound in the Oriental style. The Mohamedan works on religion—namely, the Hadis (tradition), the Fiqh (law), the Usul (jurisprudence), and Tafsir (commentary on the Koran)—are many in number, bearing the signatures of the best authors, such as Subki, Zahabi, Ibn Hajar, and others. The collection of historical works is worthy of notice. History of India, written by various Muslim writers, and also the biographies of the Emperors of the Mogul dynasty, constitute the most important portion of this collection.

"These are rare books, and unless care is taken for their preservation they are likely to be all but extinct, after the lapse of half a century. The library would, indeed, fulfil its mission if an arrangement is made to

edit and publish them. I fondly hope that before long the Government of India will turn its serious attention towards the publication of the important literary and historical works which lie buried in the library. It will only be doing its duty in bringing within the reach of the public books which deserve the attention of every person who is at all interested in the history of the Eastern nations.”*

Rare and charming as are the specimens of eastern painting and Persian penmanship, the value and importance of the library lie in its vast store of works on law and history, philosophy and theology, science and medicine, which are absolutely unique and in most cases unknown to the world of letters. On the life of the prophet, among others, we possess Kitab-ul-Wasila of Mulla and Zad-ul-Ma‘ad of Ibn Qayyim, which throw a flood of light on his public and private

* In acknowledging the receipt of a copy of this article which I sent to Professor Stanley Lane Poole, he writes to me :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ March 25, 1901.

“ I am very much obliged to you for sending me a copy of your distinguished father’s essay on ‘ Islamic Libraries,’ which I read aloud to some friends, and we were all greatly interested. It is full of information, and very much to the point. You have a noble tradition in your family of book-lovers, and your father and grandfather have done a splendid work in founding the library at Patna, of which you sent me the first volume of the judge’s Persian Catalogue—full of interest to me. I hope he will get his wish, and see a printing press established in connection with the library. May I ask you to tell me whether H.E. Lord Curzon has been approached on this subject, and whether there is any chance of the Government taking it up? I hope to say something about it in a London journal, and anything I can do in support of your father’s public spirited scheme I need not say will be a pleasure.

Yours truly,

“ STANLEY LANE POOLE.”

life. Connected with the life of the prophet is the history of the Qur'an, and on this subject too we can boast of Kitab Taisir-ul-Bayan fi Takhrij-Ayat-il Qur'an of Mauza'i and Ahkam-ul-Qur'an of Jassas Razi.* Of the historical works among others, our library is the proud possessor of Ibn Hazm's Jamharat-un-Nasab, Zahabi's Duwal-ul-Islamiyya, and a whole mine of odd and interesting information in the unique manuscript called Kitab Ras-mal-in-Nadim. The collection of works on Fiqh is specially noteworthy, but I shall only mention two : Al Mabsul fil-Usul of Fakhruddin Razi,† and Maratib-ul-Ijma of Ibn Hazm. I have alluded to these books with no other object than this, that the Government may be pleased to consider, for the present at least, the scheme of their publication. These are rare and valuable books, and their publication would be an acquisition to Oriental learning. This list does not, by any means, exhaust the rare curiosities of the Oriental Public Library, and as the catalogue comes out the Orientalists of Europe will undoubtedly discover more and more treasures and feel more and more interest in that depository of learning.

Permit me now to draw the attention of Orientalists to a few other rare manuscripts of the library. In medicine we have the Kitab-ul-Mushajjar كتاب المشجج), a treatise on medicine in tabular form by Ibn Masawayh, who died A.H. 237 (A.D. 857) at Samarra; ‡ Kitab-ul-Tasrif لمن عجز عن كتاب التصريف),

* Brockelmann, vol. i., p. 191. † *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 506.

‡ Brockelmann (Arab. Litt., vol. i., p. 282) does not mention this in the list of Ibn Masawayh's works.

(التأليف), which is a complete copy of Albucasis's great work. The portion dealing with the practice of medicine is in Maghribi character; that which treats of surgical practice is in an Old Arabian hand; A.D. 584 is the date of transcription. The illustrations of surgical instruments are splendidly drawn and beautifully coloured.* Then we have the *Talwih-ut-Tib* (تلويح الطب) of Al Khujandi, a very rare manuscript dealing with the system of medicine current among the Arabs;† and *Kitab-ul-Hasha'ish* (كتاب الحشائش). Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* was, for the first time, translated by Stephen, the son of Basil, whose translation was revised by Hunayn Ibn Ishaq. It was further revised and improved upon by Natili Husain b. Ibrahim b. Husain An-Natili. Our copy is the last revised and improved version. It is a very rare and old copy, with coloured drawings of plants and animals.

Specially interesting and noteworthy is our collection of biographical works. Among others we have the *Kitab - ul - Mu'talif - wal - Mukhtalif* (كتاب المؤلف والمخالف) of Ali b. Omar ad-Darqutni; containing the lives of the Companions of the Prophet and the Traditionists generally. It is a very old and rare copy. Then we have the *Tabaqat-ul-Hanabilah* (a very rare copy) of Mohamed b. Husain Abu Ya'la§ and As-Suhub ul-Wabilah of Mohammed Abdullah An-Najdi, a modern writer. The latter is a continuation

* Brockelmann, vol. i., p. 239.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 165.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 458.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 898.

of Ibn-Rajab's biography of the Hanbalites and covers almost six centuries (A.H. 748-1295).

Besides the historical works that I have already mentioned I shall here notice the *Kitab-ut-Tawarikh* of Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Abi'd-Dam. It is a history of Islam from the time of Mohammed down to the Ayyubide Sultan Muzaffur (A.H. 1-628).* I must not omit to refer to the unique copy of Abu Ali al-Farisi's *Kitab ul-Hujjah* which our library possesses. Neither Ibn Khallikan† nor Brockelmann‡ mentions this book in their list of Abu Ali's works. The only reference that I have been able to find to this book is in the *Al-muhtasab fi arab-ush-Shawaz* (Bankipore manuscript) of Abu Ali's devoted disciple Ibn Jinni.§ The *Kitab-ul-Hujjah* treats of Qiraat or the seven early readings of the Qur'an. Equally valuable is our collection of commentaries on the Qur'an. Among others we have *Tafsir Bahr ul-Haqiqah* of Najmuddin Abdullah Dayah. It is a commentary according to the Sufi principles, and is absolutely unknown. No other library seems to possess a copy of it. Then we have the *Tafsir Haqq-iq ul-Qur'an* of Mohamed b. Husain as Salami.|| It is dated A.H. 823. This list might be indefinitely multiplied, but I trust I have said enough to convey to the reader the importance of the Bankipur Library.

In 1893 Sir Antony (now Lord) Macdonell visited

* Brockelmann, vol. i., p. 346.

† Ibn Khallikan, vol. i., p. 39.

‡ Brockelmann, vol. i., p. 113.

§ Dr. Pröster's introduction to Ibn Jinni's *Kitab ul-Mugtasab*, p. viii.

|| Brockelmann, vol. i., p. 200.

the library, and on August 11, 1893, he wrote to my father :

“ BELVEDERE,
“ CALCUTTA,
“ August 11, 1893.

“ DEAR MOULVIE,

“ I must write you a line of thanks for the great treat that you gave me in going through with me the Oriental Library which, with rare public spirit, you have presented to Patna. I had not expected to see anything so fine. The collection of English literature is very good and made with excellent judgment, but the feature of the library is the magnificent collection of Oriental manuscripts which it contains. I have seen nothing like it out of Europe, and it bears lasting testimony to your reverence for the great teachers of Islam and to your love of the lighter products of Eastern genius. I assure you that I spent a delightful hour with you among these imperishable treasures. I shall direct that a copy of important literary works published by the Bengal Government shall be presented, as they appear, to your library.

“ I remain, dear Moulvie,
“ Yours sincerely,
“ A. P. MACDONELL.”

In 1903 one of India's greatest Viceroys honoured the library with his visit, and his remarks, which I place below, are worthy of all attention :

“ While at Patna I inspected with great pleasure the library which the liberality of Khuda Bukhsh has

presented to the public, and I was shown many of the rare and valuable treasures which it contains. I discussed with the generous donor the means by which the collection may be preserved from risk of fire or any other danger, and by which its advantages may be made even more accessible than they now are to the reader and student. I hope that steps may be taken in both of these directions.

“CURZON.”

“January, 1903.”

Lord Curzon's attention to the library was drawn by my friend, Dr. Denison Ross, of the Calcutta Madrassah, and I would add that had it not been for Sir Charles Lyall and Dr. Ross, that valuable storehouse of Oriental learning would have remained unnoticed and unknown. The present writer has enjoyed the friendship of the Principal of the Calcutta Madrassah ever since his arrival in this country, and, as was expected of him, he was irresistibly drawn to my father's library, where he found more than he had hoped to see and find. He aroused the interest of Lord Curzon in the library; and, as I have stated before, that great scholar, antiquarian, and, last but not least, statesman, visited the library in 1903.

The sanction for the construction of the reading-hall, and the preparation of the descriptive catalogue, under the supervision of Dr. Denison Ross, were the direct outcome of the Viceroy's visit. I would be guilty of the unpardonable sin of ingratitude were I to fail to mention the name of the Honourable Mr.

J. G. Cumming, the then District Magistrate of Patna (now the Judicial Secretary). To him the library is most deeply beholden. An accomplished scholar, a graceful writer (as his report on the Industries of Bengal abundantly shows), a distinguished officer, a man of liberal and catholic principles, Mr. Cumming has always taken the keenest interest in the library. It was during his time that the reading-hall was built, the lands adjoining the library were acquired, and the scheme of making a garden matured. But owing to Mr. Cumming's departure from Patna, this has been left unfinished. It was my father's dearest wish that the reading-hall should be called after Mr. Cumming; in other words, it should be named the "Cumming Hall," and the Library Committee would only be carrying out his cherished desire were they so to name it.

The reading-hall is built, and the catalogue of the library—thanks to Dr. Ross and my esteemed friend, Mr. J. A. Chapman—is in a fair way to completion. The first volume of the catalogue, which deals with Persian poetry from Firdausi to Hafiz, has just been published, and it does credit to Dr. Ross, Mr. Chapman, and the compiler, Moulvi Muqtadir. It displays an amount of research and erudition which is, indeed, rare in the East, and Dr. Denison Ross may well be congratulated on the success achieved by his pupil, Moulvi Muqtadir. Among the remarkable works noticed in this volume, Dr. Ross mentions :

1. A splendid copy of the Shah Namah (No. 1), which Ali Mardan Khan presented to the Emperor Shahjahan.

2. A copy of the Ruba'is (No. 56) of Saifuddin Bakharzi, of which no other copy is known.*
3. A splendid copy of the Haftband of Kashi, notable for its superb calligraphy (No. 114).
4. A very old copy of the lyrical poems of Salman Sawah, written thirty-three years after the poet's death (No. 147).
5. A unique copy of the Divan of Ruknuddin Sa'in (No. 149).
6. A very valuable and interesting copy of the Divan of Hafiz, from which the Emperors Humayun and Jahangir took omens, and on which they made notes with their own hands (No. 157).†

* I have edited the Ruba'is in vol. lix. (1905) of the *Z. D. M. G.*, pp. 345-354.

† Here is a letter of Sir Charles Lyall, which cannot be without interest to the reader :

" 82, CORNWALL GARDENS, S.W.,
" November 22, 1906.

" DEAR MAULVI SAHEB,

" I was much pleased to get your letter of the 1st inst., though very sorry to hear that you were not well. I also am getting old—in my sixty-second year, and shall begin my sixty-third in March next.

اویں الشاب حمیدا نوالاعجیب اویں و نکت خاڑ غیر مطلوب

" The MS. of Hafiz which you describe in it must indeed be most interesting, and I congratulate you heartily on acquiring it for your library. I know the custom to which you allude of taking omens from the Divan of Hafiz. I hope you will be so kind as to let me have a copy of the commentary on ذرا رمة which you mention, when it is printed at Hyderabad. I dare say the Kasidah is the one beginning

س بال مهیکت منها الماء پنسکب کانہ من کلی مفریہ سرب

" I know this poem very well, and have copied and translated it; but it is a difficult piece, and I should be very glad to have a good commentary. There is a MS. from India of Dhur-Rummah's Divan in the India Office Library, but the text teems with stupid

This extremely valuable manuscript was presented to the library by Subhanullah Khan, of Gorukpur, and bears marginal notes in the handwriting of the Emperors Humayun and Jahangir, who, after consulting the odes (according to the popular belief of the Mohamedans they reveal the hidden secrets of fate like an oracle), made notes on the margin, which explain in most cases the particular reasons for consulting the odes, and the results that followed after consulting them. There is an autograph note on a fly-leaf at the end by Sultan Husayan Bayaqra. True, the catalogue is now in the course of publication, but though Lord Curzon, in 1908, wrote that "he discussed with the donor the means by which its advantages may be made even more accessible than they now are to the scholar and student," more than five years have rolled away, and nothing has yet been done to bring nearer home the valued treasures of the library. The present writer, moreover, apprehends that nothing can be done unless the Government seriously addresses itself to the task of making some satisfactory arrangements for the publication of rare and useful manuscripts. Nor is this an unreasonable demand for us to make. The British Government

mistakes. There is another in the British Museum, two at Leyden, and one in Egypt. A good critical edition of the poet is very much wanted. It would be a work of some difficulty, requiring a good knowledge of the old poetry whence Dhur-Rummah drew his models. I am getting on with the *المقطيات* but the work progresses slowly, as I am very busy with other things.

"Sincerely yours,
"C. J. LYALL."

has even more Mohamedan subjects than the Sultan of Turkey, and if the French Government, with only Algeria as its possession, can spend money for the publication of Oriental texts and their translation, might we not ask the Government of Bengal to follow the example of France in this direction ? Let the Government first satisfy itself about the value and importance of the books I have suggested for publication, by appointing a committee or otherwise as it thinks fit, and when once assured of their value and importance, let the books be printed. A library, such as the Bankipore Library, can only be a useful institution if the public employ it as such. The Patna society is still too intellectually backward to appreciate its value, or to make use of its treasures. But such is not the case with the educated public outside Patna, who can neither afford time nor find opportunity to visit the library. For such persons, both here and in Europe, the publication of useful works in the Bankipore Library would be of incalculable advantage. It would be a solid acquisition to the domain of Oriental learning, which is almost dying out of India. Though India has produced some eminent Arabic scholars, who would have held their own with the choicest products of Al-Azhar, none perhaps would deny the fact that very narrow and circumscribed is the range of studies known to the average student of Oriental languages in India. This is due to two causes : to poverty first, and, secondly, to scarcity of books. European publications of Oriental texts are too costly to be within the reach of ordinary students, and the result is a very

superficial scholarship. If the Government, however, could see its way to establishing a printing press at Bankipore or elsewhere for the publication of Arabic and Persian books, under the supervision of a competent staff, it would do a lasting service to Oriental learning, which, the present writer apprehends, will otherwise either completely disappear from India, or, in course of time, be reduced to a mere mockery. Even on political grounds, the Government should seriously consider this proposal. So far the Mohamedans, as a body, have kept aloof from politics, and this, the present writer is inclined to believe, is mainly owing to the want of English education among them. Ignorance, prejudice, call it what you will, has hitherto kept the Mohamedans back, as a class, from the study of English, which they, rightly or wrongly, believe to be destructive of their religious beliefs. But, decade by decade, sheer necessity and instinct of self-preservation are opening their eyes to the indispensability of English education, without which they cannot hope for any rise or prospect in life. Arabic and Persian learning, however tempting, is steadily declining, inasmuch as it offers no prospect; this chiefly because Oriental learning here in India is so sadly deficient and so seriously imperfect. It neither makes men finished scholars nor useful members of society, nor does it put them in a position to earn their livelihood in any respectable or lucrative walk of life. It merely turns out a band of unreasonable fanatics, who rove about the country preaching the worst gospels of fanaticism and intolerance. The result, naturally, is that the so-called Oriental scholars

have entirely ceased to command the respect of the educated public. They are discredited and distrusted, and are looked upon as fit only for either teaching in village schools, or serving as registrars of births and marriages. The condition of Oriental learning imperatively demands the immediate attention of the Government. It must be made sufficiently scholarly and attractive to draw students to it, and this can only be done by placing it on a far wider basis than that on which it now rests.

Nothing is more desirable than to keep the Orientals Orientals. Western learning is, indeed, a desideratum, but not at the sacrifice of Eastern culture. The thin veneer of European civilization can scarcely regenerate the Indians. It will only tend to produce a class of people who are neither one thing nor another, and who will unite in themselves the vices of the two wholly opposed civilizations without the redeeming virtues of either. Mohamedaus should be encouraged in the study of their own language and literature, and that result can only be achieved by making those studies profitable and attractive. Surely it is not an extravagant request to ask the Government to consider the question of establishing a professorship of Arabic and Persian at Bankipore, where the students might receive direction in regard to their studies and learn to carry on Oriental researches upon European principles under the professor's control and supervision. Perhaps it will be urged as an objection to my proposal, that even if the Government were prepared to appoint a professor—where are the students? But there will be no scarcity

of students if Oriental learning receive patronage from the Government.

It is strange, nay, deplorable, that while Indian students are thoroughly conversant with the history of the American War of Independence and the thrilling stories of the French Revolution, they know nothing, or next to nothing, about their own history and its abiding lessons. Could we not have Bankipore, with its magnificent library, as a centre of Oriental learning, for at least the province of Behar?

VI

In this short sketch I have given nothing but the merest outline of my father's life. Nor was it possible to do more in the space at my disposal. It would require almost a volume to deal fully and exhaustively with the history of a career which was alike instructive in lessons and fruitful in results. The period covered by the lives of my father and grandfather—almost a century—has been the most significant and the most important in the literary history of the Muslims of India, and the biographer has not merely to recount the events of Khuda Bukhsh's life, but to discuss them in their relations to the literary and intellectual activity of his co-religionists; to compare, to contrast and to illustrate the conditions and circumstances as they stood before the Mutiny with the conditions and circumstances as they stand now. A whole generation of Indians has passed away, and with them the old order of things, yielding place to new. It was directly under my grandfather that my father was brought up and

it was under his training that he learnt those lessons of self-knowledge, accuracy of mind, and habits of strong intellectual exertion which throughout his life stood him in good stead and which made him what he became. Nor did the society of a select and distinguished band of Indians, such as Nawab Syed Feda Hassan Khan,* Syed Azmuddin Hassan Khan, C.S.I., Syed Zainuddin Hassan Khan,† and Moulvi Syed Wahiduddin,‡ with whom he had the privilege of free social intercourse, fail to produce great and, indeed, abiding influence on his habits and character. Evening after evening, after the day's work was done, did my father, still young in years, enjoy the benefit of their society. They were the old class of Indians who, unaffected by the modern spirit of materialism, with its concomitant vices of ambition, jealousy, and self-seeking, never acted but in accordance with the dictates of honour and humility, of ardent public spirit and lofty public virtue. Such a conclave of pure and disinterested and virtuous men, who would ornament any society, were the guardians and guides of my father in his early youth.

Ever since his enrolment at the Patna Bar public life divided his thoughts with literature, and when in later years the world loaded him with its envied prizes, he never ceased to mention that those privileges were the fruit, not of favour or inheritance, but of personal industry and ability.

He stood at the confines of the fast-retreating old

* Afterwards Chief Justice of Nizam's High Court.

† Father of Syed Husain Bilgrami, of India Council.

‡ Father of Shamsul Ulama Syed Imdad Imam, of Patna.

world and the incoming new world of ours, and as such his life is of special interest and value. I greatly deplore the loss of the autobiography which he commenced to write shortly before his death. Though only fragmentary—death prevented him from completing it—it was yet a store of information which the world would not have willingly allowed to perish. I am therefore left to my own recollections of that lost treasure, but I do not propose, at the end of my paper, to draw upon my memory and thereby exhaust the patience, and perhaps the indulgence, of my reader. I reserve my information for a fuller and a more complete life which I hope before long to publish.

I have not discussed his work as Chief Justice of Hyderabad, Deccan, nor have I dealt with him as a poet. Four stout volumes of odes, elegies, and *kasidas* he has left behind him, composed at intervals during the last five years of his life; and these, indeed, lead me to believe that his rank in the profession, and his position in public life, would not have been ill-exchanged for a place in the world of letters. Situated as he was, the distractions of the profession allowed him but little leisure for the peaceful pursuit of pacific culture; but though not voluminous, his writings are enough to secure for him a niche in the temple of fame.

A powerful mind in ruins is the most heart-breaking thing which it is possible to conceive, and such, indeed, was the case with him during the last two years. These were the years of trouble, of sorrow, even of gloom, due chiefly to his self-imposed poverty. "Failing health, failing eyesight, the sense of being helpless

and useless after an active and beneficent career; the consciousness of dependence upon others at an age when the moral disadvantages of poverty are felt even more keenly than youth feels its material discomforts—such were the clouds that darkened the close of a life which had never been without its trials."

When, at last, the end came, he passed from this vale of tears as peacefully as he had lived in it, nobly and gloriously; illustrating the well-worn principle, strong with the strength and immortal with the immortality of truth, that to the just and the God-fearing death inspires neither terror nor the grave the uncertainty that lies beyond it.

One word and I have done. To the long list of distinctions which the late founder of the Oriental Public Library achieved in his illustrious career, there was added, on Monday, August 3, 1908, the crowning honour, namely, of burial within the library premises. There, amid all the associations which the library enshrines; there, under the shadow of that literary pantheon, in the exalted companionship of the great writers of Islam, he rests at the end of his life's voyage. A more fitting or a more worthy place could not have been selected for him.

نے دی نامے کو اتنا طول غالب مختصر لکھئے
کہ حسرت سنبھل ہون عرض ستمبھلے جدائی کا

VI

HINDUSTANI LITERATURE

SOME SUGGESTIONS

THE zeal for making a nation's great instrument of thought—its language—correct and worthy is undoubtedly a sign full of promise, a weighty earnest of future power. Thus wrote Matthew Arnold in his charming essay on the "Literary Influence of Academies." For nearly forty years, owing to a variety of causes, little or no attention has been paid by the Mohamedan community to the cultivation or encouragement of Urdu literature. It cannot be suggested, however, that throughout this period Hindustani literature has lain absolutely fallow or entirely neglected. The only thing that we do suggest is that its growth has been slow and fitful and not as it should have been, regard being had to its position and importance in India. We can mention great names that have arisen and great works that have been written during this period; but there has been a marked absence of a conscious, deliberate effort on the part of the Mohamedan community, to improve, to extend, to enrich their literature; there has been a marked absence of that pride which every nation

worthy of that title feels in its own national literature, and which carries it onward in the path of glory and renown. This has been owing, as we have intimated, to a variety of causes, the foremost of them being the astonishing growth of English education, for reasons other than mere love of learning or acquisition of knowledge. Our own language was assigned a secondary, almost an unimportant, place in the curriculum of studies. And the natural result was its steady decline, leading, slowly but surely, to its wilful neglect. I cannot speak with confidence of the United Provinces or other parts of India, but of this I am positive, that not one Mohamedan out of a hundred, in Bengal or Behar, can write or speak his language with any degree of accuracy, much less with ease and elegance. This is a mournful and distressing truth. On the contrary, I have known graduates of the Calcutta University—Mohamedan graduates—who looked upon their own language and literature with silent scorn or thinly disguised irony. And this not because Urdu literature is really a heap of nonsense, unworthy of the consideration of graduates of the Calcutta University, but simply because they have never taken the trouble to study it. They have formed their judgment and founded their conclusion upon the study of low-class Urdu journals, or, perhaps, works of ill-educated writers who court fame, or rather notoriety, by the publication of a very inferior order of poetry. But whatever may be the grounds for such opinion, not the worst detractors of our literature can charge it either with poverty of thought or a want of dignity of expression. The permanent elements of good

literature—width of thought, flawless beauty, and exquisite dignity of expression, an unfettered outlook, a catholic sympathy, a deep insight into man and his character, measure, sobriety, effectiveness—all these are to be found in Urdu literature and in sufficient richness, alike in our prose and in our poetry. To charge Hindustani literature with a dearth and poverty of noble thoughts, enshrined in noble diction, is the most flagitious ignorance. In it the Mohamedan intellect of India has reached its highest fruition, its grandest height. Sawda and Mir Taqi, Mir Hassan and Mir Soz, Atash and Nasikh, Zauq and Ghalib will stand comparison with the greatest poets of any age or any nation. In their works we cannot fail to recognize the sublimest heights of poetic imagination, the most placid, imperturbable philosophy of life, the struggle of high souls with the uglier realities of life, the laughter and tears of humanity, the power of soothing and healing afflicted hearts. They make us see and feel and know what life is. They lift us from our dead selves to higher things : the true province, the essential duty of a poet. But have we now got anyone to compare with them ? Has the spring of the Mohamedan intellect passed and gone, gone irrevocably, irredeemably ? Is Urdu literature now doomed to sterility ? I cannot take such a pessimistic view of things. It was only in 1869 that one of the greatest of our poets and prose writers—Ghalib—was laid to rest. Not fifty years have yet elapsed since he ceased to sing those eternal notes of sadness of which his own life was an illustration and a commentary. I decline to believe that within

this period the Mohamedan intellect has completely withered away. No ! Urdu literature has yet before it a wondrous career of advance and expansion. Nor are there even now men wanting, men possessing unrivalled powers of intellect and imagination ; but circumstances, which enmesh and enervate the human will and paralyze the human intellect, have either crushed or stifled the great gifts with which Nature has endowed them. The ceaseless struggle for existence, the growing poverty of our community, the necessity of earning a decent livelihood, the want of court patronage, the absence of sympathy on the part of the rich and wealthy for letters and men of letters—all these have, in a large measure, contributed to the extinction of a class of men who pursued literature as a profession, or who sought learning and literature as an avenue to fame and distinction. Nobody has felt this more deeply, more keenly, more bitterly than the present writer, but in a true lover of letters these very disadvantages would rather tend to stimulate than to extinguish that supreme overmastering passion for the acquisition of human knowledge. Whatever has been done towards the growth of our literature for the last forty years has been done by such men, and we only hope and trust that their number, as time goes by, will increase rather than decrease. No people without a literature can ever thrive ; and this is a fact which we cannot too clearly and forcibly impress upon our co-religionists. Sir Syed Ahmed—that gifted statesman—very correctly appreciated the importance of a true, genuine, popular literature, and it was to this end that in 1870 he established the

Tahzibul Akhlaq (The Social Reformer), "the professed object of which was to display most effectively the resources of the Urdu language as a means of expressing modern ideas."

It is one of the most healthy and promising signs of the times that this necessity for a national literature is now being felt more and more deeply and more and more widely. In the September number of the *Salai Am* my esteemed friend, Mir Nasir Ali Khan Bahadur, its distinguished editor, has invited the opinion of his co-religionists as to the question of forming a society for the cultivation and promotion of Hindustani literature. In this proposal he has the warmest support and the most enthusiastic approbation of every Mohamedan—nay, of every Indian—interested in the future of Urdu literature. There is no doubt that a society, consisting of men of talents, of eminence, of acknowledged reputation, would be a society at once weighty in influence and fruitful in consequence. The grand aim of this proposed society, as I conceive it, is to set up as a recognized authority, imposing on us a high standard in matters of intellect and taste. It is not necessary to enter into the details of the constitution of the society, but we might here pause and consider the best means of attaining our purpose and of using that purpose to good account. Its centre must, of necessity, be Delhi, the seat of the Moghul Emperors, the home and hearth of purest and chastest Hindustani. No other place can be what Delhi is. Even in its ruins it stands, among the Indian cities, unique and unrivalled. Where else can we have a town, round which so thickly cluster

the traditions of ages ? Where else can we have a place (Lucknow excepted) associated with the memory and lives of so many great men ?—and it is this precisely which confers on it its own special, ineffable charm. It is Delhi, therefore, which was, and which must ever remain, the reigning queen of our language, and this queen must we now ask to establish for us "the High Court of letters" which would lay down authoritative rules of language, decide all questions of style, pronounce judgments on matters relating to literary taste ; in fine, set up the standard of literary excellence.

I am deliberately of opinion, therefore, that Delhi, and Delhi alone, should be the seat and centre of this society ; but its members must be limited, and the qualifications for its membership severely and rigorously fixed. Its gates should be shut against no one, if he has the necessary qualifications. Against admission to it neither race nor religion should be a barrier. It must be a veritable republic of letters. Or else there is the danger—a fatal danger—of the society degenerating into a narrow, sectarian oligarchy which an intellectual body must never be. Insularity and aloofness, factiousness and cliquishness are apt to destroy flexibility, adaptability, openness and clearness of mind. Its duty should be twofold—a duty which the society would discharge through the medium of its recognized organ. It should do original work, and, secondly, it should bring nearer home to the Indians, by means of authorized translations, the works of great Western writers. We cannot afford to cast aside the gifts of European civilization. Nor

can we pass over, in disdainful silence, great contributions to learning made by Europe. Thus, and thus alone, shall we annex a large tract of knowledge to our language. We shall improve our prose, we shall enrich our thoughts, we shall pave the way for original work so sorely needed, and in which our literature has hitherto been so singularly and so conspicuously poor and deficient.

I use the word "original" in opposition to work which is imitative or which is mere adaptation or translation of already existing work. By original work I mean literary criticisms, historical researches, any work of art or fiction which owes its conception and execution to the genius of the author, and the author alone. To achieve anything great requires years of apprenticeship; to train and educate national taste needs centuries of direction, guidance, wholesome restraint, and effective control.

But wholesome restraint and effective control can only be exercised by a body of men who command the public confidence and who, by their past services to letters, are in a position to assume the rôle of dictators. It is for this reason, and for no other, that its membership should be open to none but acknowledged masters; men of accepted and acclaimed renown. For instance, who would dare question the verdict of a literary tribunal composed of men like Hali, Shibli, Nazir Ahmed, Syed Ali Bilgrami, and others of their intellectual stature? To be a real, effective body, pledged to serious work, it must, on no account, be unwieldy. In our society it is not number that we should aim at, but rather efficiency, earnestness,

and zeal. To keep it active and up to its high level, it would be desirable to publish its proceedings, to hold annual conferences where all the members could meet and submit the year's work for the consideration and criticism of their fellow-members. Its sphere of work should be eminently practical. It should edit and publish under its authority works of our classical writers; translate into Hindustani valuable books written by European authors, suggest subjects for the study of those who interest themselves in our language and literature, encourage, by example and precept, critical studies and critical essays; and last, but not least, revive the forgotten study of the Arabic and Persian languages.

The achievements of the *Nabaat ul-Ulama* are, indeed, highly encouraging, and I am sure that a society, formed on the lines indicated, would soon become a powerful engine of reform and culture, carrying sweetness and light to the remotest corner of India. I rejoice that a distinguished friend has seriously taken up this matter, and I feel certain that he will carry it through with his characteristic energy and enthusiasm. In an incredibly short time Mir Nasir Ali Khan has succeeded in securing for his journal, the *Salai Am*, a position and a status second to none among the journals of modern India. Its articles are sound and scholarly, luminous and illuminating. They are free from the defects—the besetting sin of Oriental writers—of over-heavy richness and overwrought finery of style. They are, on the other hand, perfect models of simple, flowing, chaste, and vigorous Urdu. Mir Nasir Ali Khan's

efforts, in the direction of improving the Urdu language, constitute an era, a landmark in the literary history of the Indian Mohamedans. He is laying, slowly and silently, the foundation of a splendid modern literature, now in the process of making. This, like many other movements which are stirring India to its depths, is a sign full of hope and promise. With the help and co-operation of his countrymen my friend, the editor of the *Salai Am*, will soon wipe the stain off the escutcheon of the Mohamedan community, the stain which sullies it, the stain of the absence of a noble, dignified, modern, progressive Urdu literature, worthy of its tradition and consistent with its past.

VII

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

I

POLITICAL.

"For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes."—ST. LUKE vi. 44.

RIGHTLY or wrongly, I have always kept aloof from modern Indian politics, and I have always held that we should devote more attention to social problems and intellectual advancement and less to politics, which, in our present condition, is an unmixed evil. I am firmly persuaded that we would consult our interest better by leaving politics severely alone. I am aware that no progress is made in one march or even series of marches, but we must set about it in a proper, practical manner. It is not a handful of men, armed with the learning and culture of the West, but it is the masses that must feel, understand, and take an intelligent interest in their own affairs. The infinitesimal educated minority do not constitute the population of India. It is the masses, therefore, that must be trained, educated, brought to the level of unassailable uprightness and devotion to their

country. This goal is yet far beyond measurable reach, but until we attain it, our hopes will be a chimera, and our efforts futile and illusory. Even the educated community have scarcely yet cast off their swaddling clothes of political infancy, or have risen above the illusions of power and the ambitions of fortune. We have yet to learn austerity of principle and rectitude of conduct. Nor can we hope to raise the standard of private and public morality so long as we continue to subordinate the interest of our community and country to our own. India must needs be washed clean of her stains of racial warfare, religious bigotry, narrow prejudices, and must come out fresh-robed in the wedding garment of purity before she can aspire to have fixed, effective polities of her own. There can be no freedom without the spirit of union. But irresponsible political pedlars have filled the country, from one end to the other, with wild, insan speeches which have corrupted the youths of the country, drawing them away from their legitimate occupation to the paths of sedition and anarchy. This false and ignominious system has borne fruit in producing mistrust and disaffection, in exasperating racial warfare, in destroying personal security, in paralyzing the efforts of commerce and industry. Nothing is more needed than our whole-hearted co-operation with the Government in stamping out, root and branch, this seditious propaganda which, like a network, has overspread the whole country. I do not believe in lip-sympathy or word-coining or phrase-making; nor do I set much value on lengthy speeches consisting of splendid periods and elegant

perations. We must actively support the Government in destroying sedition and anarchy.

Our immediate field of work lies in spheres social, religious, and educational. We must, for the present, banish politics from the programme of our activity. To the problems affecting us most vitally we must turn, with single-minded devotion, and upon these must we concentrate our attention if we are intent upon the advancement of the interest of our community.

Let us, to begin with, make a solemn effort to heal the breach in our own camp; to unite, in loving brotherhood, the two sects—the *Shiahs* and *Sunnis*—divided, as they now are, by envy, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. We talk of unity, but we have the barrenness of death and division at home. The fabric of Islam is torn by dissensions, fierce and bitter to a degree; and we sit in our arm-chairs, comfortably and complacently speculating over franchise, self-government, membership of councils, etc.

Long speeches are delivered at educational conferences and Muslim leagues, but not a voice is raised for the restoration of peace, concord, and harmony among our own people, bound by the ties of religion, and linked by the ties of kinship. What a noble sight it is to see the police officers interfere at Moharrum between the followers of the Prophet to prevent a breach of the peace! Does this redound to the credit of our community? I trow not.

Look at the state of affairs a little deeper! What must we say of a society which transforms licentiousness into elegant frailty, and treachery and falsehood

into pardonable finesse? Should we not combat, with all our might, these social evils which are sapping the very life and vitality out of our community? Are these not problems calling for attention and solution? I am drawing up (I am only too keenly aware of it) a severe indictment against my own community, but we need have no delicacy any longer if we are to proceed onward. We want no palliatives, but the surgeon's knife to cut the cancer—social cancer—away.

Education may not be the cure for all social evils, but it undoubtedly goes a long way towards regenerating a community. But it is just that which we neglect. It is perfectly painful to consider the number of students—*bona fide* students—who, for sheer want of means, are unable to pursue their studies. I have personally known a number of men in Calcutta who had to discontinue their studies because no one would come forward to help them. If a tithe of the money which the rich wickedly and wantonly waste over their sordid pleasures and marriage festivities were applied to the education of the members of the community, a great number of students would be relieved of their embarrassing position. But there is no society to plead for them; no organized charity to bring relief to them.

The education of women, the elevation of their status, is a question which yields to none in weight and importance. By a kind of tacit prescription they are relegated to the four walls of the *zenana*, steeped in ignorance and superstition. Can a society reach its real stature of progress and development if divested of those soft, refining influences; those heart-subduing

graces ; those unfailing springs of encouragement and compassion, the exclusive privilege and prerogative of women, and which constitutes life's deepest, holiest joys ?

But for *Khadijah's* encouraging counsels, Mohamed would scarcely have been the prophet and law-giver of the Islamic world ! But for his mother, Abdullah Ibn Zubair would have died the death of a coward and renegade ! Instances might be indefinitely multiplied, but it is a proposition which none would dispute. Bertrand Barere's noble tribute to womanhood will not be out of place here : "The wives and mothers are the priests of the family. They give their children their first education ; they teach them religion and charity ; they preserve their purity of heart while stimulating and directing their intelligence. Happy are those whose education has been directed by mothers, who combine the virtues of their sex with studies fit for them. A good mother is the basis of the family ; she devotes to it her care and tenderness equally. No one can better know and apply what is necessary to the first stage of life, the physical and moral influence of which is so great on our after-existence. . . . A mother gives her child the first teachings of that Divine religion which emancipated woman, and assigned such a pure, useful, noble, and necessary part in family life to her."

A great deal of our social evils is due to the condition of our womankind, and so long as we keep them in ignorance we cannot hope to impart to our children those lofty virtues which adorn a civilized and free people. It is at home that we learn the

sense of duty, the sense of unity, the feeling of sympathy and compassion for the poor and suffering, honesty, uprightness, fidelity, and dignity.

We must deserve before we demand. Let us prove ourselves worthy, and everything will come to us. But let us not mistake the twilight for the dawn. Let us proceed, but with slow, cautious steps, improving our social conditions, enlarging our intellectual horizon.

II

SOCIAL.

"A wise man keeps both his eyes open, belongs to no party, and sees things as they are."—FROUDE.

This is one of the many lessons of practical wisdom with which the writings of the English historian teem. Froude is not only one of the great masters of the English language, but he is also a profound thinker. Throughout his history and essays we come across passages which clearly reveal the depth of his mind and the elevation of his thoughts. If it is impossible to see things with our eyes shut: it is equally impossible justly to appreciate, or correctly to estimate, social problems and religious questions with a veil of prejudice, *parti-pris* and prepossession hung over our vision. It needs a very superior mind to perceive that great fundamental axiom of real life—namely, that the service which man owes to God is not the service of words or magic forms, or ceremonies or opinions, but that of holiness, of purity, of obedience to the everlasting laws of duty. It requires

a very high culture to perceive that social institutions, hallowed by the practice of untold generations, have become effete, time-worn, useless, even mischievous. The generality of mankind rarely think. They follow blindly, they accept unhesitatingly, what they have been taught, and what their forefathers have practised; and to abandon the trodden path requires an effort—a painful effort. In the following pages we propose to discuss what we consider to be the defects and drawbacks in our social system. Such discussions have a special value, and we trust that others will come forward with their own views on a subject which is of engrossing interest and supreme practical utility.

"Truth and freedom are twin-sisters; the surest guide to truth is freedom, and the truth makes us free." It is only by free discussion, unrestrained freedom of thought (but freedom must be distinguished from licence), that we can hope to arrive at the truth. The purpose of free discussion is twofold. It serves, on the one hand, as a corrective to wild, extravagant views, and it assists us, on the other, to discover our real needs and requirements.

We do not believe in gazing into the starry heights merely to find the earth a poor spectacle and men a little breed. In other words, we do not despair of human progress. The world moves and we move, or, at all events, we should move, with it. Nor have we any sympathy with the class of men (unfortunately the larger portion of our community belongs to that class) who take it for granted that our religion and our social system admit of no corrective, or call for

no improvement. Such a theory were subversive of all progress. To claim perfection is to shut the door against progress, and to deny the influence of new ideas which, according to Dumas, hidden in the depth of the soul, throw out deep roots. The mind of man is no inert receptacle of knowledge, but absorbs and incorporates into its own constitution the ideas which it receives. It would be the merest affectation to contend that religious and social systems, bequeathed to us thirteen hundred years ago, should now be adopted in their entirety without the slightest change or alteration. This is exactly the battlefield on which for the last fifty years a relentless war has been waged in India between the party of light and hope, and the party which is wedded to the old order of things. Though the God of battle has not yet pronounced His verdict, the signs of the times are clear enough. It is certain that the party opposed to progress has not a very long lease of life left to it. It is doomed and dying, and it might as well reason with the winds or threaten the waves of the sea. New ideas, large formative conceptions, are seething in the intellectual and emotional cauldron of our day. And hence the stir and activity in our community. True, the conferences and meetings of the Muslim League have not done all they could have done, but the energy, the enthusiasm, and the earnestness which we now notice are reassuring signs, full of promise for the future. Our hope centres in the younger generation, with its deeper beliefs, greater generosity, fewer prejudices, and sounder education, and we trust that they will prove themselves equal to the task.

which lies before them. They have a noble mission to fulfil, and that mission is to educate their co-religionists in breadth and sympathy, which are the only possible means of diminishing prejudices and breaking down barriers. Their mission, further, is to illustrate by their own lives the union of faith with knowledge, the combination of intellectual activity with moral purpose and directing ideals, and finally to exemplify the eternal supremacy of righteousness. This class is still very small in number, but we doubt not that it will grow year by year and decade by decade.

The age of transition is necessarily to a certain extent an age of laxity of morals, indifference to religion, superficial culture and gossiping levity. But these are passing ills which time itself will cure. Now let us proceed to examine the general frame-work of our social system as it stands ; reserving religious questions for future consideration.

The one fact which more than another stands out in bold prominence is marked inertia, unmanly dependence, an unmistakable unwillingness on the part of the majority of our people to work for their living. This is due to want of self-respect—that spirit which revolts against mendicity, whatever shape it may assume. Nothing else, indeed, than mendicity is it for relatives to depend upon the bounty of one working member of the family. And yet, in hundreds of families, scattered all over India, we meet a number of men who are dependent upon one man who works and toils incessantly to feed and clothe the idlers and the hangers-on. Charity is an admirable virtue, but

it is meant for the deserving and not for those who, from sheer idleness, will not exert themselves or strive to secure a living.

Another contributory cause, to our mind, is the false pride of lineage or ancestry which we not infrequently encounter among the members of our community. It is deemed unworthy of a man who claims descent from the Prophet, or from some great hero of Islam, to take to the humbler occupations of life. The one great ambition of our people now is to obtain admission into Government service, to the utter neglect of trade and commerce and the indigenous arts and crafts. But Government posts are not numerous enough to provide for every youth, and hence young men will rather do nothing than betake themselves to other pursuits. Our people forget that some of our greatest writers, whose names history will ever continue to cherish, were tradesmen ; and the historian of *Eastern Civilisation under the Caliphate* expressly notes that " at that time [at the time of the Caliphate], and even partially up to now, every one in the East busies himself with some trade or craft for his livelihood. There were few Government posts, and the modest independence which a trade or craft offered was always prized as the most honourable fortune." [Khuda Bukhsh's translation of Von Kremer's *Culturgeschichte des Orients.*] Let us mention two noble instances : Sa'id Ibn Mussayab carried on an oil trade. Abu Hanifah lived upon his moderate income as a merchant. The most casual reference to a biographical dictionary would prove the statement of Von Kremer. If such great leaders and pioneers

of thought as Sa'id and Abu Hanifah were not ashamed to engage in trade and commerce, why need the Indian Mohamedans have any scruples or hesitation about them? The early Mohamedans were the most successful traders in the Middle Ages, and the latest discoveries and excavations have unearthed Mohamedan coins as far as Scandinavia; a clear proof of the fact that their commerce extended far and wide. Intellectual progress and material prosperity generally go hand in hand. We cannot neglect the latter without damaging the former. We should, therefore, actively encourage our arts and crafts, and seriously turn our attention to trade and commerce. Idleness and indolence are as demoralizing to individuals as they are dangerous to society. It is from this class that the majority of the law-breakers, the discontented and the able-bodied *Faqirs*, the curse of society, are recruited. Far from trying to root out these evils, we blink at them; nay, we actively support and maintain them by our misguided philanthropy. While it would be difficult to get together even a hundred rupees by way of subscription for the education of poor students, money would flow in in abundance for building a *mosque*, or establishing an *Imam Barah*, or endowing a *Khanqah*, or, worse still, for feeding able-bodied *Faqirs*, or for patronizing fanatical *mullahs* and *Moulvies*. Some do it out of religious conviction or pious zeal, but we have a lively suspicion that most of us do it for show and exhibition. By this sort of foolish charity we put a premium on idleness on the one hand, and fraud and imposture on the other. Not very long ago I noticed in Calcutta

three boys, scarcely over fifteen, begging from door to door. I stopped them and told them that instead of begging they should take to some work ; to which they indignantly replied that begging was their hereditary vocation, and in a rich city like Calcutta, they made much more by it than they ever would get in any employment that they might take up.

This evil is not difficult to meet if we only set about it in a proper spirit. Why can we not establish a society in every town to collect subscriptions and to bring relief to the poor and the suffering, the widows and the orphans ? Would not this be real charity ?

The clearest result of the break-down of our old system of domestic life and social customs under the assault of European ideas is to be found in two directions—namely, in our religious beliefs and in our social life. It is perfectly true that Islam is too well entrenched to be easily thrown down, but not the most superficial observer could fail to notice the change that has come over us. Our community may roughly be divided into two classes—the representatives of the older system and the representatives of the new, the dawning era.

It is needless to add that the educated class of the younger generation belong to the latter. The old system, with all its faults, had many redeeming virtues. The idea of responsibility to God, who is omnipresent and all-seeing, was a check far more effective than the one furnished by the Indian Penal Code. The truly religious man avoided evil and cultivated virtue, because virtue was more acceptable

to God. As a result of religious beliefs the standard of morality was high, and the effect of public opinion necessarily severe. Every action was brought to the bar of public opinion. Society exercised not a nominal control, but a real vigilance over its members. Its judgment was enforced by the penalties which it inflicted for violation of, or deviation from, the recognised standard of private conduct and public morality. I am not unaware that people then practised polygamy more freely than they do now. I am not insensible to the fact that there were then, as there are now, flagrant cases of falsehood, treachery, moral obliquity or downright immorality. To claim for the past a stainless social purity or virginal sweetness would be altogether inconsistent with facts. But I do say that breaches of faith or lapses into immorality were not then committed in broad daylight and open defiance as they are committed now. And why? Because the religious hold has been considerably weakened and the standard of morality thereby decidedly lowered among us. We connive, now, at faults and blemishes which, in earlier days, would have been visited with the gravest punishment. Though I do not, for one moment, believe that to be religious we must be rabid fanatics, I do hold that a community without deep, earnest religious faith can scarcely attain much good. Even so great a free-thinker as John Stuart Mill has told us in his autobiography that he would be sorry for the day when religion disappeared from the world. The sphere of law must necessarily be confined and limited; in those broad regions of private life beyond the reach

of law the safest and surest and the most powerful corrective is religion, and religion alone.

But, as I hope to point out in the sequel, we must learn to distinguish religion from its forms and ceremonials. Religion is as much subject to changes and improvements as our manners and customs are from age to age. Without faith, however, we would float over a dreary, shoreless sea of incertitude, seeking for some plank to cling to; some land, dim and distant, to attain. But the faith, to be a living faith, must be in harmony with the spirit of the age and the growing consciousness of the people.

Another feature equally noticeable is the strange independence of thought and action which we notice in our people. Reverence for age, respect for our elders, deference to the opinion of others are fast disappearing. This is remarkable, and it is remarkable all the more because of the fact, already noticed, that a large number of our people depend for their bread and butter upon others. Under the older system the head of the family was the sole guide and friend of its members. His word had the force of law. He was, so to speak, the custodian of the honour and prestige of the family. From this exalted position he is now dislodged, and the most junior member now claims equality with him. Not merely did each family have a head man who controlled the affairs and guided the action of the younger men, but each quarter of the town or the city had a man who constituted, so to speak, a court of appeal, where disputes were settled, advice was sought, and matters relating to the general welfare were decided.

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION 227

Within the last twenty-five years all this has now become a thing of the past. It is the courts—courts of small causes and *Fowjdari* courts—that now have a strange, overpowering fascination for us.

As a great master of practical wisdom has put it, everything that frees ourselves without giving us control of ourselves is ruinous. This is exactly what has happened. Destruction has done its work; but the work of construction has not yet begun, or, at all events, it is proceeding at almost imperceptible pace.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster."

We should, above all, impress upon our co-religionists the lesson of self-reliance and self-dependence, for without these it is idle to expect to foster those virtues without which we can be neither good members of society nor good subjects of the Empire to which we have the honour to belong.

But with self-reliance and self-dependence we must have respect and reverence, too; respect for those who are superior to us, and reverence for those who have given soul-subliming truths to man.

III

DOMESTIC.

We have by no means exhausted the list of evils which affect our society. We have only pointed out so far the most glaring and the most obvious ones. The unmanly dependence of our youths, their neglect of arts and crafts, their contempt for trade and commerce, their sneering and scoffing attitude towards religion, their indifference to morality, their levity and light-heartedness, their want of respect for age and seniority—all these are the outcome, direct or indirect, of our defective family life, where liberty is indistinguishable from licence, and healthy vigilance from meaningless conventionalism.

The marked feature of our family life, as it now stands, is the absence of that loving regard, that feeling of oneness, which at once strengthens the bonds of affection and deepens the sense of altruism, self-forbearance, and self-sacrifice among its members. A society or community is nothing else but a collection of families ; the family may be reckoned as the type of society.

Not that these feelings were absent in the East, but rather the other way. They existed in a most intense shape, but they are now distinctly on the decline. I am inclined to ascribe this state of things to the gradual weakening of religious sentiments among us. Religion, day by day, is becoming a mere formality, and not a living reality as it has been in the past, with us. This is to be regretted, but it is a problem which we must face. Religion must be expansive,

progressive, and in harmony with advancing ideas and enlarging thoughts. Unless it is that it is bound, in course of time, to cease to appeal to our growing intellect, and, instead of holding society together, it becomes a blight, a curse, a dead weight upon progress.

We propose to discuss this question at more length in the sequel.

The tendency now is to reduce the family limit ; to make the family consist of the man, his wife and his children. Beyond this circle the obligation ceases. If anything is done for others it is a mere charity ; not as anything obligatory or binding.

I will not discuss the soundness or otherwise of this view, but this is the view which, undoubtedly, is now gaining ground. I would merely point out that this system would be considerably shorn of its apparent severity and harshness if we had that larger sympathy, that generous consideration, those humane sentiments, the flower and fruit of which we have in Europe in thousands of hospitals, nursing homes, etc., maintained by free gifts or voluntary subscriptions. But to have the one without the other is, to my mind, a palpable absurdity.

We must not forget that social systems grow from within and are not transplanted from without. They are the expressions of natural needs and requirements, and not the manifestations of passing phases of thought. Take, for instance, an obvious illustration. I can well recall that system of free education, now a thing of the past, which obtained in this country only twenty-five or thirty years ago. Men in

easy circumstances who could afford to keep *Moulvies* for the instruction of their children allowed, in their houses, free admission to the children of their less fortunate neighbours. Each quarter of the town had in this way its own free schools where elementary education was given. Here did the young boys learn to respect those older in years or superior in social status; here, again, did they learn, at the most impressionable period of their life, love and devotion to their religion.

This system had, of course, its limiting conditions, the education imparted being mostly religious, but it had its compensating advantages. We now have schools right enough, and in profuse abundance, but those who are in straitened circumstances can ill-afford to pay for the schooling of their children. The result, naturally, is that a large number of boys must now go without any education of any sort whatever. And what becomes of them? They become either servants, or petty menials, or beggars, or do-nothing gentlemen-at-large, living on the bounty of others, or, worse still, low-class criminals.

The old system has disappeared, but nothing has taken its place. Have we sufficiently numerous scholarships or exhibitions for our poor students? We have hardly any! What a woeful picture is this! If this is the fate of the less lucky members, no less unfortunate is the condition of the wealthy members of our community. I may almost say, without the least fear of contradiction, that in most houses we would scarcely find a library consisting of even 500 books. Books are the commodities least in

demand among us. The rich are plunged in one vortex of pleasure, gaiety, sordid sins or venal ambitions.

There is no healthy emulation or honourable rivalry, no desire to shine in literary spheres or to pioneer in the world of the sciences. Surrounded by courtiers and only too often, indeed, by courtesans, their inseparable companions are either vile flatterers or insatiable drunkards. Instead of intellectual gatherings they have demoralizing carouses; instead of healthy social meetings they have "night after night of running kisses and chirp after chirp of changing doves." This is no extravagant exaggeration, but sober truth. Children brought up in this poisonous atmosphere can hardly be expected to be a credit to their society or a glory to their country. We cannot gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. Let us, then, first and foremost, purify and sanctify our home and hearth. We cannot lay the foundation of a healthy community on a foundation of sand. We cannot have a very high regard for womankind with a system which sanctions four wives. Polygamy is destructive alike of domestic peace and social purity. Nor can we have a sound basis for family life with women sunk in the deepest ignorance and the wildest superstitions. Without physical exercise, without the benefit of fresh air, without a ray of intellectual sunlight, can women be mothers of a race of stalwart warriors, intellectual giants and far-sighted statesmen?

IV

SUGGESTIONS.

دوست کرتے ہیں ملامت غیر کرتے ہیں کلہ
کیا قیامت ہے ہمیں کو سب بُرا کہنے کو ہیں *
میں کلہ کرتا ہوں اپنا تو نہ سن خمروں کی بات
ہیں یہی کہنے کو وہ بھی لور کیا کہنے کو ہیں *
شکود حرف تین کا یا شور بختی لا گلہ
ہم جو کچھ کہنے کو ہیں سوبے ٹرا کہنے کو ہیں *
مولوں خاں

My ambition is not to light the way into unexplored regions. I have undertaken a more modest task—the task of dealing with actualities and common-places, the things which cry aloud to be set forth anew for every generation. We have already stated that our hope centres in the educated few. They are the scouts in advance whom the bulk of the community follows with unhesitating confidence. They must formulate and fashion public opinion, inculcate lessons of self-respect and self-reverence, infuse into our religion breadth and toleration, encourage honesty of purpose and rectitude of conduct, and, last but not least, devote themselves to the culture and refinement of our womankind. They are, indeed, the trustees of the unborn generations.

We are charged with fanaticism. We are accused of ignorance and extravagance. We are taunted with keeping our womenfolk as birds in a cage, as toys to

play with, as ornaments to decorate our houses, and with not assigning them their legitimate due as members of our society, as our partners in art and science. We are repeatedly told that we, for no accountable reason, claim preferential treatment at the hands of the Government ; that we rely, not upon merit, but favouritism. Are these accusations really founded on fact, or are they malicious libels levelled at us and our society ?

I, for one, readily plead guilty to this indictment, and I believe not one thinking Mohamedan will be prepared to deny that there is more than an element of truth in it. Infinitely better is it to acknowledge our faults ; infinitely better is it to cure and rectify them than to persist in, or to connive at, our errors and vices. By cynical indifference to our own, as well as our community's material and intellectual interests, we have made ourselves the laughing-stock of our more progressive brothers ; the target for the shafts of their satires and calumnies. It is folly to deny what is clear as day. To administer the right remedy we must correctly diagnose the disease. Now as to the last charge ; there is no doubt that we, by our own conduct, have given colour and an air of truth to it. The young Mohamedan who is fortunate enough to pass his F. A. Examination takes it for granted, that he has reached the height of education available in this country. Judging himself by the standard of his friends and associates, he overrates his importance and forms exaggerated notions of his abilities, and he forthwith starts in quest of a Government appointment. He carefully draws up a petition dwelling upon his legendary ancestry, detailing the

services his ancestors have rendered to the Government during the Mutiny, and presses his case on the special consideration of the authorities. After posting or personally delivering his application to the district officer or the Chief Secretary he, with self-satisfied complaisance, awaits the letter of appointment, which in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred never comes. In a futile and hopeless expectation glide insensibly away the best days of his youth. For him each year brings new hopes and disappointments new, till, at last, when hope fades and the pinch of poverty becomes insupportable, he secures, after special pleading, a clerkship or a sub-registrarship, carrying a small pittance. Such instances are, indeed, only too numerous. Usually such men are not in easy, much less in affluent, circumstances. They belong to respectable families who have seen better days. During these years of vain expectation, they usually run through their little fortune and not infrequently contract debts. When they do succeed in obtaining an appointment, half their pay goes to their creditors and with the other half they try their best to make both ends meet. Beneath neat dresses and smiling countenances, I have found, alas! very often, vexed minds and bleeding hearts. Our chief failings are want of thrift and want of foresight. Rich and poor alike are victims to them. Their evil consequences they realize, but they realize them when it is too late to mend their ways. Here the Mohamedan compares very unfavourably with his Hindu compatriot, who is generally a model of thrift and self-control. But not only in thrift and self-control does the

Hindu excel the Mohamedan. The former is incontestably his superior in capacity for work, in family devotion, in temperance, in sacrifice for education.

Here lies the secret of the material prosperity and intellectual advancement of the one, and the poverty and ignorance of the other. In my younger days when I led an almost ideal life of unclouded joy at Oxford—that seat and centre of learning, that home and hearth of culture and refinement, that famous city, grey with years and hedged round by noble traditions, of which no Oxford man can think without a tear or at least a sigh—in those days of intellectual bliss and devotion, I regarded the magnificent invocation of Heine to gold as exaggerated and overdrawn. But the uglier realities of life and the bitter struggle for existence have now convinced me, beyond doubt, that no man or community can really be great in arts or sciences or literature if not sufficiently well off to secure ease and leisure and freedom from that petty “dust,” which each day brings “our soon-choked souls to fill.” No! Heine in poverty, privation, and squalor felt what a great magician gold is, how it helps us in realizing our dreams and how it gives us the power of the gods themselves, what grandeur and sublimity there is in its possession, and how it is the mightiest yet the most obedient of our slaves. If we are to advance in the sphere of art and science and literature, we must develop our material resources, cultivate our arts and crafts, and take to commerce and industry. For this digression I ask the reader’s forgiveness. These unfortunate ones of whom we have been speaking, working on a small and wretched

286 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

pay, and even giving half of that to their creditors—are these, indeed, in a position to give any education worth the name to their children? Clearly not. Every other man of our community we meet has this very mournful tale to tell.

But the mischief does not end here. Our whole system is so unfortunately shaped that under it it would seem impossible to make headway or to advance one step successfully. Our Law of Inheritance is so framed as to reduce the wealthiest family, in a generation or two, to narrow circumstances, if not to utter penury. And yet we must not lay our unhallowed hands on it. It is a part of our religion, say its zealous supporters, and as such it must continue, for ever and ever, with all its defects and imperfections, its short-sighted policy, and its disastrous consequences. Moreover, our partial and limited power of making a will is another source of countless mischiefs. The tendency of modern legislation is to concede the highest freedom to individual action compatible with the safety of society. We have absolute freedom of contract, we have unreserved liberty to deal with our property as we like, under every conceivable system of modern laws. But we, in spite of new light, in spite of continuing progress, must keep intact sumptuary laws and a patriarchal system, the exploded fallacies of a past age. These restraining laws are not only antagonistic to the spirit of the age, but corrode and disintegrate society. Take the most obvious results. It is rarely that we come across educated men in our wealthy classes.

The reason is not far to seek. The moment

children realize that they will be inheritors of fortune, large or small, all incentive to work is gone. They bid adieu to their books and farewell to their teachers. Early do they come to know that they cannot be disinherited or deprived of a share in the property. The result is that they take to most gross and hideous vices which ruin the health and pave the way for a premature death.

To the *Chandu*, *Ganja*, *Madak*, there have now been added European wine and spirits, the worst and the most expensive of all. Further, to meet their exorbitant demands, they begin early to borrow money at a heavy rate of interest. By the time they actually succeed to the property—the expectation of which has been the cause of their ruin—they are either heavily involved or their entire share is in mortgage to the nearest *mahajan*. It is well-nigh maddening to see and watch these evils destroying our society, ruining its manhood, lowering its moral and intellectual tone, and yet to do nothing to remove, to redress, to palliate, if not altogether to cure them. Perhaps we are waiting for some prophet carrying tables of law in his hand to descend from the mountain with a new revelation. If such is our expectation, it is one void of hope, and the sooner we rid ourselves of it the better.

The tendency to extravagance in our community is further strengthened by the wholesale adoption of European customs and modes of living. The Mohamedans have a remarkable power of absorption and assimilation. They assimilate foreign habits and adopt foreign manners far more quickly than any other people. Islam is by no means conservative or

exclusive. It is free from the barriers of caste, and it imposes no such restrictive rules upon social intercourse as does Hinduism, for instance. The strength of the Mohamedans consists in their power of adaptability to all conditions and circumstances ; their weakness in their inability to withstand the pressure of foreign and extraneous influences. This has ever been the case with them. The old Islam, says Von Kremer, had lost its exclusiveness by contact with foreign religious systems. It had not become more tolerant, but the ruling classes had become more indifferent. The old hatred of the Arabs against everything foreign had disappeared under Persian influences. The treasures of Greek literature had been brought to the Arabs through the Syrian Christians, and there suddenly arose among all active and intellectual men an intense passion for the study of the "ancients"—i.e., Greek authors. . . . From this, which brought many new conceptions and ideas into the intellectual horizon of the Muslims, there were developed the Arab schools of philosophy which soon took a theosophomystic turn, while the orthodox Islam sought more and more to develop a firm and exclusive dogmatic system. "The foreign influence, however, was not confined to the world of letters, for we are told that, in Baghdad, Persian fashions continued to enjoy an increasing ascendancy. The old Persian festivals of Nawruz, Mihrjan, and Ram were celebrated. Persian raiment was the official Court dress, and the tall, black, conical Persian hat (Qalansuwa Pl. Qalanis), similar to our European top hats, were already prescribed as official by the second Abbasid Caliph (in

A.H. 153 = A.D. 770). At the Court the customs of the Sassanides were imitated, and garments decorated with golden inscriptions introduced which were the exclusive privilege of the ruler to bestow." (Khuda Bukhsh, "Contributions to the History of Islamic Civilization, pp. 93, 109.)

It is apparent that Mohamedans have always possessed a striking power of absorption and assimilation. This, at times, has accelerated, at others has retarded, their progress. In the beginning it helped them in fashioning their law, religion, and social institutions, and in governing their Empire; for they unhesitatingly adopted the institutions, social, political, legal, which were serviceable to them. But when they lost their individuality as a race, as a people they became effeminate and debilitated by those very things which, in the earlier stages of their national existence, were their power and strength. They became a mere tool in the hands of foreigners and servile imitators of their ideas. They lost their genius, their originality, and finally their Empire.

Now what has happened here in India? We have adopted European costume, European ways of living, even the European vices of drinking and gambling, but none of their virtues. Nobody is a greater admirer of European civilization and European learning, and nobody more anxious than the present writer for our co-religionists to participate in the ripened culture of the West, but when I have said this I have come to the parting of ways. Thus far and no further. To me East is East and West is West. India can no more be England than England India.

We must learn at the feet of Europe, but not at the sacrifice of our Eastern individuality. But this is precisely what we have not done. We have dabbled a little in English and European history and we have commenced to despise our religion, our literature, our history, our traditions. We have unlearned the lessons of our history and our civilization, and in their place we have secured nothing solid and substantial to hold society fast in the midst of endless changes. We have developed expensive habits; we are imitating luxurious modes of living, but we have not succeeded in learning that supremest of practical lessons—viz., the lesson of making money. Hence the woeful poverty, the dire penury, the appalling catalogue of miseries, writ large on the face of our community.

Yes, we have neglected our own learning and we are masquerading in borrowed feathers. Instead of drinking and gambling, why not learn from the Europeans their sense of co-operation, their exalted idea of duty, "that stern daughter of the voice of God," their thoroughness, their perseverance, their practicalness, their commercial activity, their devotion to learning? And, better still, why not turn to our own history to find examples to follow and imitate? Where do we find men more earnest and more single-minded in their devotion than the first four Caliphs; a knight more chivalrous than Saladin; a philosopher more bold and fearless than Nazzam; a genius more versatile and encyclopædic than Avicenna; a warrior more intrepid and dashing than Khalid; a man more pious and saintly than Sa'id Ibn Musayyab? Are these not examples to stimulate

our ambition or to excite our admiration ? But these names will sound strange and unfamiliar to many of us. I deplore the neglect of our learning and literature more than anything else, and I earnestly hope that we will soon redeem this neglect by an enthusiasm worthy of the cause.

In religion, in morals, in politics, it is now the fashion to believe one thing, to profess another. It is reckoned a virtue or wisdom to suppress the truth, if not to profess what you hold to be a false opinion. I have the privilege of knowing a gentleman, a *Mohamedan by profession*, who owes his success in life to his faith. Though, outwardly, he conforms to all the precepts of Islam and occasionally stands up in public as the champion and spokesman of his co-religionists ; yet, to my utter horror, I found that he held opinions about his religion and its founder which even Voltaire would have rejected with indignation and Gibbon with commiserating contempt. But it is not he alone who thus wears the cowl of sanctity, but here are hundreds besides who count hypocrisy as a venial sin and falsehood a pardonable weakness.

This is not, to our mind, a light offence. It is, indeed, fatal to the very well-being of our community. It is precisely because we believe, with Lord Morley,¹ that opinion, and nothing but opinion, can effect great permanent changes, that we ought to be careful to keep this most potent force honest, wholesome, fearless and independent.

All this is due to our want of courage to recognize the simple truth that society is a growing organism

¹ *On Compromise*, p. 97.

and the institutions of the past demand progressive readaptations. Since we have not the strength of will and firmness of resolution to face the truth, we accept the other alternative—namely, contented acquiescence with the ordering that has come down to us from the past. We see the absurdity of the position, but our indolence and timidity prevent us from laying the axe to the root of the tree. We perpetuate error, we sanctify falsehood, we publicly applaud but inwardly condemn our social and religious institutions. Instead of leading the masses to truth and light, we help them in maintaining a stupendous fabric of folly, ignorance and superstition.

The decisive sign of the elevation of a nation's life, says Lord Morley, is to be sought among those who lead or ought to lead.

Leaders, in the sense that Sir Sayed Ahmad and Nawab Mohsan-ul-Mulk were leaders, the Mohamedans do not now possess. We have, indeed, numerous self-styled leaders, but they have no warrant or title, other than their own inclination, to keep themselves constantly in evidence and thereby facilitate the path of glitter and glory, Government titles, and perhaps Government posts. In such self-styled leaders the Mohamedan community is, perhaps, the richest in India. We have political leaders, social leaders, religious leaders, mercantile leaders; leaders of all sorts: in fact, as many leaders as there are followers. Let us carefully look into the various types of our leaders. The typical leader is the man who makes morning and evening calls upon the officials a religious duty which must needs be performed at all hazards

and at all risks. Besides the calls, he must never fail to propose a vote of thanks to the chair—whether asked or unasked—at a public meeting, if the holder of the chair is a high official. Moreover, he must, ever and anon, speak on behalf of his community with a sureness and assertiveness to impress upon the Government that he is their plenipotentiary and accredited spokesman. Further, he must pose as the greatest living authority, competent or otherwise, on Mohamedan law and religion. As for character and conscience, the less he has the better for him. He acts upon the well-known saying of Goethe: "Men of action are essentially *conscienceless*." This is the most successful type of leader. The next type is equally fascinating. It is the leader whose supreme virtue and highest credential is his inconsistency. He preaches one gospel on Monday and the very reverse of it the following day. We do not regard this as a vice, but as a virtue. We view it as a sign of mental progressiveness, and enlarging ideas, or perhaps as a proof of readiness to reject a mistaken notion for something maturer, sounder, and more suitable to the occasion. Then we have a class of leaders who, perched on the Olympian heights, look down with philosophic contempt on those less lucky than themselves. They love to have many tongues buzzing about them, chanting their virtues and singing their praises.

With learning they are in permanent feud; and with learned men, consequently, they have no sympathy. With leaders of this sort, there is no sovereignty but that of wealth; no nobility

244 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

but that of official position. The unfortunate nobody who visits him to offer his homage rarely succeeds in extorting a word or a smile from him. He sits mute till the delicate performance known out here in India as "paying respects" is over, and he departs with relief to himself and to the leader. These, then, are the three main classes into which the present writer is inclined to group the leaders of his community. Of these leaders there is this, however, to be noted. They are exceedingly generous with lip-sympathy with the Mohamedans and their cause, but they rarely relax the strings of their purse for the benefit of their community. When it comes to payment, they wisely draw the line and plead multiplicity of calls upon their treasury as the reason for not unloosening the strings of their purse. Why is it, then, that our leaders, while coveting the laurels of leadership, shirk its duties and responsibilities? The reason is clear enough. It is not the promotion and welfare of the community which lies nearest to their heart, but the advancement of their own interest, the furtherance of their own cause! Leadership is merely a cloak for self-advertisement, self-aggrandisement, a path to cheap fame and personal glory.

These are some of the home-truths which we would do well to ponder over. I do not find fault with the ambitious individual who makes his community the footstool for his own success in life. The fault is with the people who tolerate such impudence. With an intelligent public and a strong public opinion such imposture would not succeed even for a day. But we

are culpably negligent of our own interests and we reap as we sow.

Whether I am right or wrong—whether my views are accepted or rejected—of this, however, I have not the faintest doubt : that no educated or self-respecting man will, for one instant, justify self-indulgent silence and hypocritical reserves, complaisant assents and false affirmations. All that I ask of my educated co-religionists is that they should bear in mind and put in practice the golden maxim of life with which that sweetest singer of our days—Algernon Charles Swinburne—has concluded his supreme code of ethics “The Altar of Righteousness.”

“Far above all wars and gospels, all ebb and flow of time,
 Lives the soul that speaks in silence, and makes mute earth
 sublimer.
 Still for her, though years and ages be blinded and bedimmed,
 Mazed with lightnings, crazed with thunders, life rides and
 guides the wind.
 Death may live or death may die, and the truth be light or
 night.
 Not for gain of heaven may man put away the rule of right.”

V

LEADERS.

“Ah Love ! could thou and I with fate conspire,
 To grasp this sorry scheme of things entiro,
 Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
 Remould it nearer to the heart’s desire ?”

OMAR KHAYYAM.

Those who would love mankind must not expect much from them, is the half sad, half cynical verdict of worldly wisdom. Thus writes one of the greatest of

living writers. Distrust on the part of contemporaries ; suspicion on that of friends ; pelting scorn from the masses : these are the rewards which reformers and prophets have received in all ages and at all times. Thus humanity continues, now as always, garnishing the sepulchres of the prophets which its predecessors have stoned. The prophets and reformers have been, and will always be, men of like passions with us ; with this all important difference—that in them, unlike mankind in general, the Divine spark was not suffered prematurely to die away. They felt the inward message and determined to carry it out. That Divine spark which lurks in every bosom continued to burn bright and steady in them. At the sacrifice of all the glittering glories of the world, at the cost of their very lives, they preached and proclaimed the ideas which they held to be just and right, and built for themselves names among the names that can never pass away.

Socrates, condemned as a corrupter of youths; Jesus, crucified as a setter-forth of strange things ; Mohamed, persecuted for his religious mission : these are the instances, a few among many, of the poetic justice which man metes out to man, to his sponsor, to his exponent, to his benefactor. The soil is manured by the most precious of human lives, and each step forward involves waste and wreckage at once fearful and appalling.

If the world, however, only rarely and at long intervals sees the vision—the supreme, beatific vision—of a Socrates, a Jesus, a Mohamed, it is not out of reach of the humblest and the meanest mortal that ever walked this earth to follow light and do the

right, and to contribute his quota, however modest it may be, to the well-being of society and the general welfare of humanity.

When Ghalib wrote :

(بسم) مسئلہ ہے ہر ایک کام کا آسان ہونا
آدمی کو بھی میسر نہیں انسان ہونا

he was setting up a lofty standard by which to judge man—man, the noblest of God's creation. He would not have man grovelling in superstition, steeped in egotism, sunk in sin and immorality, stripped of high aims and noble ideals, but man created in the very image of God, pure, chaste, altruistic, high-souled. The philosophic historian, Sallust, tells us that man shares the qualities of the gods as well as the beasts. Ghalib would have man clothed with the attributes of God, whose image he is, and not with those of the beasts.

Were we to turn but occasionally to our own literature, what a harvest of noble, edifying thoughts would we find therein. No! such a mistake we would not make. Rather, from the pinnacle of self-esteem, we would survey the world; to find it merely a theatre for the display of our little strength, an arena for our petty battles. Pygmies and dwarfs we like to remain for evermore, devoid of representative men in the domain of thought, of great workers in the domain of action.

We have already dealt with the sort of leaders that we now possess—men of strange mediocrity, of strange sterility of character, of sleepless ambition, ever ready

to sacrifice the community's interest to gain their private ends. With such men at the head of society, is it not but natural that we should be deficient in those qualities of the heart and mind which train and befit men for life's severe struggles and the world's glowing prosperity ?

Well might we sigh with Hafiz :

۰۱۳ مزیداں روی سوی کعبہ چوں اریم چوں
رو بسسوی خانہ خمار دارد پیرما

The days have gone by, we trust, never to return, when a child was born to the station of its parents. We are now living in a world which freely opens to all the prizes that are to be won by labour and thought.

همراهان در منزل آرامیده و غالب زعف
با برون نارفة از نقش کف پایم هنوز

To these simple truths, which experience day by day forces upon us, we turn a deaf ear ; leading an indeterminate existence, awaiting something which we do not understand and care not to inquire into. Is it the far off millennium ? Is it some gleaming hope invisible to all but our co-religionists ? Is it some mysterious prophecy to be fulfilled in near future ? What is it ? The present writer is unable to apprehend or explain. Or is it the unwillingness to face the truth, to shirk and shrink from the coarser, uglier, harsher realities ? This seems to us most likely to be the case. Why this nervous apprehen-

sion? Would we not do well to confront what lies before us, to seek a remedy, to find a solution for our present backward, degenerate condition? Let us face the truth in scorn of consequence.

In a society such as ours there is no encouragement to honest labour, real merit, intrinsic abilities. Here more than anywhere else we find the saying illustrated that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. We put a premium on fraud and imposture. We distinguish not the real from the counterfeit. We suffer ourselves to be made the stepping-stones of the ambitious, the aspiring, the hypocritical, who look upon us as fair game. We treat with indifference and contempt those who, with better opportunities, would have been the leaders of thought and the standard-bearers of truth. We offer the incense of flattery, in unceasing torrents, to men in power, while we suffer our men of genius to fret, to struggle, to starve, to die, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. We worship power, whether it resides in a constable or a Lieutenant-Governor of a Province. How different are things here to what they are in Europe; nay, to what they were in Mohamedan countries in days gone by. If we do not respect ourselves, what right have we to call for respect from others?

اپنی خود کرٹے نبے عزت گرنے کرتا تھا کوئی
سردار ایک قرعون کے آگے نہ نہوڑاتے تھے ہم

But as things are (a terrible truth it is) nobody out here is respected who does not hold a Govern-

ment post, be he a scholar, a philosopher, a jurist of renown, or an artist of great celebrity. With us it is not the man who adorns the office, but it is the office which adorns the man. We know many a sheep masquerading in a lion's skin ; many a fool delivering supposed oracles of wisdom. The modern Indian is a strange personality—eringing to his superiors, tyrannical towards his inferiors ; fawning, flattering, and abject when an official deigns to take notice of him. We claim equality with the English. We resent what we consider rough treatment at their hands. Have we any right or justification to make this complaint ? Nobody has a greater admiration, a more genuine respect, for the English than the present writer. He has enjoyed their kindness here, their hospitality at home ; not for one or two or three, but for nine cherished years. An Englishman loves truth, honesty, self-respect, integrity, and straightforwardness—virtues in which we are so sadly and conspicuously deficient. Often and often have I heard the complaint that Indians call upon officials ostensibly to " pay respects " ; but, in truth, merely to ask for a favour, for a post, for a transfer, for an appointment, and such things. When asked the object of their visit they will, with self-complaisance, say that they have come to " pay respects," and after wasting ten or fifteen minutes, or even half an hour, they would explain the object of their visit. Is this the way in which our people expect to enlist sympathy ?

Sir Lancelot Hare has pointed out, in his recent speech at Dacca, the loss of manners as the most striking feature of the Indians of to-day. I, for one,

entirely subscribe to his views. It is astonishing to notice the arrogance, the petulance, the want of good breeding, polish, grace, and politeness in the people of our days. Herein they compare most unfavourably with the older generation now fast disappearing.

We need only refer to Hali, the first and foremost in the shining heaven of song, to see the picture of Mohamedan society painted in its naked, hideous deformity. His "Musaddus" is a doleful tale of the vice and immorality, the selfishness, self-seeking and hypocrisy which are corrupting Mohamedan society through and through. It is, if I may say so, the epitaph, the funeral oration over our community in India. His verses express the authentic cry of the human heart—sad, weary, depressed at things as they are.

With leaders such as we have described, it is not likely that we would have "societies" working for the benefit and in the interest of our community. We have a large number of societies scattered all over India—societies with ostentatious names and splendid programmes. We have one-man shows, which frequently, indeed, stand out before the world as the sponsors and exponents of Mohamedan hopes and aspirations. We have societies which lie dormant for months and months, to wake up one fine morning to consider an address of congratulation or farewell to some mighty magnate, who either comes to, or goes away from, this beautiful country of ours, where all except her sun has set. Then by a magician's wand, as it were, the members rise from the dead, meet together, display their skill and ingenuity in the

sublime art of flattery and panegyric, vie with each other for the honour of reading the address, and anxiously look forward to the great day of joy and rejoicing when they are to wait, in deputation, to receive a nod, a recognition, or to shake hands with the great god of worldly power, the recipient of the address. We have, further, societies the express object of which is to bring this or that man into prominence, usually the secretary. Of these societies we never hear or read any report, annual or monthly. Of their working we know next to nothing. They exist in name, and that is all.

What do all these things teach? What lessons do they bring home to us? They are simply this, that the very foundations of our belief and conduct need to be reconstructed, that we need fixed stars to steer by, firm principles to lead and guide us if we are successfully to compete for the prizes of life with the other communities in India. The ancient tyranny of custom and routine which keep us pinned to the archaic must now give way to the new order of things if we are to be a progressive community.

Unless and until we take these lessons seriously to heart, our society must continue to be what it is—a society so remote from all benignant ways as to demand nothing less than the advent of a kindly comet to sweep the whole affair into nothingness.

VI

ALLEIN.

"Der Frauen Zustand ist beklagenswerth."—*GOTHE*.

In that supreme masterpiece, "Iphigenia in Tauris," Goethe makes Iphigenia say: "Yet truly deserving of lament is woman's lot." This pathetic, tragic utterance, drawn, as it were, from the deepest depth of despair, Iphigenia supports with a logic at once forcible, trenchant, and convincing. At home an imperious lord to obey and to serve; abroad, a life of utter forlornness to face. Such is the destiny which fate has woven for women; very unlike man, indeed, who

"Rules alike at home and in the field,
Nor is in foreign climes without resource:
Him conquest crowneth, him possession gladdens,
And him an honourable death awaits.
How circumscrib'd is woman's destiny!
Obedience to a harsh, imperious Lord,
Her duty and her comfort, sad her fate,
Whom hostile fortune drives to lands remote."

From the earliest dawn of history man has asserted a right and dominion over woman, enjoyed advantages and privileges which have been denied to her. This, undoubtedly, has been due to his physical superiority rather than his intellectual eminence. It is only within recent times that women have awakened to their claims and to the assertion of their rights, and this, indeed, all the world over. In England the forward march has been more apparent than elsewhere; but even in the pacific and conservative East

women have raised their heads, and have called for their due.

Pierre Loti, in his "Les Desenchantees," has very truly remarked that among the Turkish women there is a decided spirit of revolt against the severe régime of the harem. But this is as true of India as it is of Turkey. Muslim women are getting educated day by day, and now assert their rights. Though the *purdah* system still prevails, it is no longer that severe, stringent, and unreasonable seclusion of woman which existed fifty years ago. It is gradually relaxing, and women are getting, step by step, rights and liberties which must in course of time end in the complete emancipation of Eastern womanhood.

Forty years ago women meekly submitted to neglect, indifference, and even harsh treatment from their husbands, but such is the case no longer. They claim and, indeed, have succeeded in securing, a decided position in their household (no longer the position of a housekeeper), and cases are not rare of women completely controlling the movements of their husbands, and holding the strings of the purse. Eastern women are by no means now those poor, suffering, patient, and unfortunate creatures whom the missionaries fondly delight in describing as the women of the East. Education, though very imperfect still, is daily gaining ground, and with education new hopes have dawned upon them; and, possibly, the sex question may, in the remote future, become as acute here as it is in the West. The more educated families have done away with the *purdah* altogether, such as the family of Tyyabji in Bombay and that of

Mr. Syed Ali Belgrami in Hyderabad Deccan. It is not Islam which enjoined the *purdah* system, but as Mr. Ameer Ali, in his "History of the Saracens," points out (p. 199) : "The custom of female seclusion, which was in vogue among the Persians from very early times, made its appearance among the Muslim communities in the reign of Walid II. And the character and habits of the sovereign favoured the growth and development of a practice which pride and imitation had transplanted to the congenial soil of Syria. His utter disregard of social conventionalities, and the daring and coolness with which he entered the privacy of families, compelled the adoption of safeguards against outside intrusion, which once introduced, became sanctified into a custom. *To the uncultured minds, walls and warders appear to afford more effective protection than nobility of sentiment and purity of heart.*" It is incontestible that the improvement in the social status of women, here as elsewhere, is due to a large extent to European influence, which is predominant throughout the East. In the East women have always been regarded as child-bearing machines, and hence they have never risen to that position and eminence in which we find them to-day all over Europe. It is true that the East has produced women of high culture and political insight, but these are exceptions and not the rule; the average woman has always been what we have described, "a child-bearing machine," devoted solely to domestic affairs. When Haji Baba tells us how he showed himself a true Muslim by his contempt for womankind, he expressed a universal truth openly

accepted and publicly avowed in Eastern countries. What is the cause of this low estimate in which women are held? True, European influence has largely alleviated their lot, has considerably widened their outlook on life, has invested them with rights and rescued them from oppression; but to our mind the true emancipation of womankind must indefinitely be put off so long as the system of polygamy flourishes, drawing its sanction from religion.

The author of "Reforms under Muslim Rule" seeks to make out that polygamy is an institution which Islam does not sanction, but I am not quite sure that he is right. At all events, the unanimity and consensus of opinion is the other way. It may, with growth of education and freedom of women, die out, but the question which we must decide, and that once for all, is whether it is an institution compatible with present-day notions. The question, then, resolves itself into this: Is this institution to be retained or done away with? Is it conducive to the interests of society or otherwise? If the general sense of the Mohamedan world condemns it as pernicious to the stability, happiness, comfort and peace of the family, let it be expunged from our law. If it approves it, retain it by all means. I do not believe in the argument constantly put forward that the conditions which the Qur'an imposes upon its practice are too difficult of realization, and, as such, according to the strict letter of the law, the practice cannot be supported or sustained. But this is no answer to the question raised here. Is the institution *per se* good or bad? Is it beneficial to the interest, or subversive

of the well-being of society? There can be no two opinions on this point. To our mind the social corruption behind the *zenana* is, to a large extent, due to this system. It is a fruitful source of discord, strife, harassing litigations, the ruin of many wealthy families. Nor can we ignore the fact that it is this system which is responsible, in no small degree, for the degraded view of womanhood current in the East. It is impossible to expect among a polygamous people that exalted idea of wedded life which we would expect, and which we do, as a matter of fact, find among those that are monogamous. Take a European and an Indian home and see the contrast. The wife in the West is a friend, a companion who is never in that mortal terror of a rival to contest or to supplant the affection of her husband in which a wife in the East is. The Eastern wife may at any moment be dislodged by another, and relegated to everlasting sorrow and perpetual gloom. This idea colours the whole life of our women. They are meek and submissive, humble and accommodating, patient and painstaking; but this, in most instances, not by choice, but by compulsion. There is not that relation which is founded upon the equality of rights; that feeling of oneness which the ceremony at the altar at once creates, strengthens and perpetuates. There is not that feeling of fellowship and partnership of two human beings linked together to toil through life's journey, in weather foul or fair, and to remain one unto death in the eye of the law without the darkening shadow of a rival, or a co-wife or a concubine. Hence the supreme difference between a

Mohamedan and a Christian marriage. While the former is merely a contractual relation liable to termination at the will and caprice of one of the contracting parties, the other is a deeply religious function, sanctified and consecrated by the Church, and to be severed only by death.

Polygamy and divorce generally go hand in hand. In Eastern Bengal divorce is the order of the day, and wives are put away as we cast off our old clothes. And so also in Egypt and Arabia. No judicial inquiry, no positive proof, not a tittle of evidence of any sort is needed. The lord of creation is invested with the power of divorce, and he makes full and free use of it. Is a high regard and reverence for womankind conceivable under a system such as this? Marriage becomes only one remove from promiscuous intercourse. Its significance, sanctity, importance in domestic life is destroyed, and women become mere instruments to satisfy passion and gratify lust.

Whatever may have been the origin of the *purdah* system, it is clear enough that it is founded in the belief, though not openly confessed yet clear enough, that women cannot be trusted to themselves; that the female sense of virtue, piety and chastity is too frail and feeble to withstand the temptations of free social intercourse. In no other light is the existence of this system to be explained or justified. I may be charged with drawing a picture of our society in colours far worse than it is; but I am confident that no thoughtful man will disagree with me that these are defects, most vital defects, which we must seriously attempt to remove and set right. The barbarous and wanton

waste of money on wedding festivities, the perverse prejudice against widow-marriage, and the equally perverse system of early marriages, are evils too patent to be passed over in silence. Nor shall we omit to point out that iniquitous system, obtaining very largely in Behar, the system of keeping good-looking female servants and a retinue of female slaves who usually give to the children their earliest lessons in vice and immorality.

True, within the last quarter of a century there has been a distinct and pronounced tendency to check these evils, but there is not yet a deliberate, strenuous, persistent effort to destroy them, root and branch. Occasional voices, indeed, do we hear protesting against them, but they fall on unwilling ears. The Muslim societies, in our opinion, should take it upon themselves to grapple with these problems, to arouse an interest in them, to bring home to our people the necessity of united and concerted effort to purify the stream of domestic life and social system.

انکس است اهل بشارہ کے شاریعہ داند
نکتھا ہست بسے محرم اسرار کجاست

VII

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

کنرو دین چیست جز آلایش بندار و جود
پاک شو پاک که هم دنر شو دین تو شرد

GHALIB.

"I never can make out how it is that a *knight-errant* does not expect to be paid for his trouble, but a *pedlar-errant* always does;—that people are willing to take hard knocks for nothing, but never to sell ribands cheap;—that they are ready to go on fervent crusades, to recover the tomb of a buried god, but never on any travels to fulfil the orders of a living one;—that they will go anywhere barefoot to preach their faith, but must be well bribed to practise it, and are perfectly ready to give the Gospel gratis, but never the loaves and fishes."—RUSKIN.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for that is the whole duty of man—commandments, to be sure, the very same in all religions. This simple principle, though perceived by all right-thinking men, is yet very far from universal acceptance; for had this been the guiding principle of life, history would have been painted in far other colours than those which have so long chequered its course. To discern between the carnal and the spiritual, to reject the former and adhere to the latter, is given but to few of us suffering mortals. And yet reformers in all ages have impressed upon their contemporaries this noble truth; have striven strenuously to unearth this half-buried pearl.

To one like the present writer, born and bred in an atmosphere free from narrow religious views, and saturated with liberal and catholic sentiments, it has always been a mystery why one man should be at

strife with another over diversity of religious belief, or even why religious differences should ever stand in the way of the most entire social, religious and political harmony between man and man, community and community, race and race. Religion is too deep, too sacred, too exalted to be dragged *in this way* into the petty details of our common-place daily existence. Would that we could realize and follow this truth.

We would not, for a moment, accept the dictum of a celebrated courtesan that "a person who needs the help of religion to get through life is to be pitied; it is a certain sign either of lacking intelligence or a very corrupt heart." On the contrary, we fully recognize its importance, its gravity, its far-reaching influence in human life. Is it not religion, as the poet sings, which teaches weak wills how much they can achieve, which falls on dry hearts like rain, and which whispers to self-weary, moribund man, "Thou must be born again"?

There seems, indeed, to be in religious men, says Froude, whatever be their creed and however limited their intellectual power, a prophetic insight which puts to shame the sagacity of statesmen, and claims for the sons of God, and only for them, the wisdom even of the world. Those only read the world's future who have faith in principle, as opposed to faith in dexterity, who feel that in human beings there lies, really and truly, a spiritual tendency which the wisdom of the serpent cannot alter and scarcely can affect. And Froude has hit the nail on its head. But true religion is to be distinguished from its counterfeit. Listen to what the Qur'an says: "That

is not righteousness, whether ye turn your faces towards east or west; God's is the east as well as the west. But verily righteousness is his who believes in God, in the Day of Judgment, in the angels, in the Book and the Prophets; who bestows his wealth, for God's sake, upon kindred and orphans, and the poor, and the homeless, and all those who ask; and also upon delivering the captives; he who is steadfast in prayer, giveth alms, who stands firmly by his covenants, when he has once entered into them; and who is patient in adversity, in hardship, and in times of trial. These are the righteous, and these are the God-fearing." Here, in this passage, is summed up that essence of true religion which is one and the same in every existing system: Humility, faith, charity and cheerfulness. The rest is not worth troubling over or fighting for. Take these as the supreme guides of life, and all humanity becomes one brotherhood; striving after one common goal—"to become like to God with a pure mind and to draw near to Him and to abide in Him."

If we would only act up to these shining precepts, which will remain to the end of time unshaken and unassailed in their supremacy, our life would not be what it is, an unceasing war with our fellow-men, each with the mail on his breast and sword loose in its sheath. It is not love, peace, charity, truth, justice that we worship and cherish; it is not these broad lessons that all religions teach which we take seriously to heart; but it is to superfluities, accretions, non-essential elements that we cling with a passionate devotion. What is it that all religions, with an

absolute unanimity, teach us? Is it not to make us "not merely do the right things, but enjoy the right things—not merely industrious, but to love industry—not merely learned but to love knowledge—not merely pure, but to love purity—not merely justice, but to hunger and thirst after justice"?

But the fact is that religion has now, all over the world, been separated from life. It has become a dull, dry, meaningless routine. It is lost in ritual and ceremonials, fitful superstition and fanatical passion. It is no longer a vital, vigorous, all-subduing force, restraining and extirpating vice, fashioning character, developing moral and spiritual powers. We would rather be a Pagan suckled in creed outworn than one of those Christian or Muslim worldlings of whom society seems mainly to consist. I would be the last to lay this fault at the door of the religions of the world. It is the fault of their exponents, their interpreters, who persist in burying truth in a heap of unsavoury dogmas and incredible superstitions. The result is that while the real teachings are neglected and forgotten, the unessential elements have been given an undue and obtrusive prominence.

People go to church as regularly now as they ever did before, but the motive is no longer worship but show and display of latest fashion. The church is the most important matrimonial market in the civilized Europe of to-day. People go to the *mosque*, in troops. Friday after Friday, in rain and sunshine, but how few there are whom unalloyed religious feelings take there. I have seen long-bearded Muslims, who would rather starve than miss a prayer, gaily enter the

witness-box, with beads in their hand, to swear to a falsehood for a mess of pottage, a few acres of land, a few thousands of rupees. I have known men who freely indulge in that licensed form of prostitution known as *mutah*, beat their breast with frantic vehemence, rend their clothes, cast dust on their head, mourn in sack-cloth and ashes, year after year during the *Moharrum* for the murder of the grandson of the Prophet.

Sin as much as you may, a visit to the *Karbalah* or blessings from a *mujtahid* would whitewash all and secure an assured passport to Paradise. The belief, though half-hidden, is yet fully confessed that a pilgrimage to Mekka or a visit to the *Karbalah* is a sufficient atonement for the sins, excesses, and incontinences of a life-time. What a caricature ! What a travesty of Islam is all this !

We have *muftis* who would willingly give any *fatwa* you want, provided you only made it worth their while to do so, and *mujtahids* who would unblushingly sanction incest if their pockets were only well-lined with gold and silver. The Islam that we now have and now see is not the pure, undefiled Islam of the Prophet Mohamed—that Islam which called forth those acts of heroism and self-sacrifice, that love of justice and righteousness, that sense of loyalty and obedience, that passionate attachment to Allah and His cause, which made the early Muslims what they were—conquerors of the world and the most tolerant of rulers. Our modern Indian Islam is a pliant, flexible, accommodating Islam which fails to make the distinction between right and wrong,

religious devotion and rankest fanaticism. It is of little moment whether you lead an immoral life, rob an infant of his heritage, break the plighted oath, commit perjury in law courts, look upon mankind as fair game, and regard life from the narrow standpoint of personal pleasure and advancement. All this you may do and much more with impunity, so long as you keep a long, flowing beard; declare the rest of mankind *kafir*, doomed to eternal damnation; shun the liquid ruby; perform the five daily prayers without understanding or trying to understand what they mean; and fast in the month of *Ramazan*. These are the credentials which we now require to enter the Paradise of the Prophet peopled with *houris* as fair and exquisite and beautiful as polished ivory or lucent alabaster. While the true spirit of our religion has departed from us we are as fanatical as ever; fanaticism, unreasoned and unreasoning, is the lord we implicitly obey. It is a distressing fact that in India religion is made the base of the most hostile operations by one community against another. It is a fact which we must not and dare not overlook if we are to share our common burden, to work for our common good. We are constantly told that Mohamedans are a distinct people, as unlike the Hindus as the Semite is unlike the Aryan; that there are differences penetrating to the very root of life; differences of habit, temperament, social customs, racial type; that these differences are so vital and so enormous that the fusion between the two is a hopeless impossibility, an impracticable dream. Now I am not at all sure that this argument is sound. Admitting that the

Mohamedans came to India as foreign conquerors as utterly different to the Hindus as the English are different to us both, we cannot forget that for many centuries they have lived side by side, freely mixing with the people of the land, mutually influencing each other, taking Indian women as their wives, adopting local customs and local usages ; in fine, permeated and pervaded through and through by local characteristics and local peculiarities. The most infallible proof of this we find in the marriage ceremonies, which are entirely Hindu ceremonies, in the customs of the women-folk, such as the use of the vermillion mark, the symbol and token of wedded life, the restrictions imposed upon the dress and diet of widows, the disapproval, nay condemnation, of widow marriages, and, indeed, in a thousand little practices behind the *zenana*.

All this indicates somewhat more than mere superficial connection between the two races which mainly divide the Indian population. A yet clearer proof is the unity of language and the similarity of dress. Moreover, say what we will, a large number, in fact the largest portion of the Mohamedan population, are Hindu converts to Islam. It rests upon no unwarranted assumption, but upon well ascertained facts, that Hinduism and Mohamedanism have acted and reacted upon each other ; influencing social institutions, colouring religious thoughts with their mutual, typical, religious hues. The *Panthis* of Kabir Das and the *Nal Daman* of Faizi are but conspicuous illustrations of the union of the two streams of Hinduism and Islam which, since Muslim conquest, have flowed side by side in India.

Why and how comes now this bitterness of feeling between the two communities? Both live under the same laws, enjoy the same rights, share the same responsibilities, pay the same taxes, have the same educational facilities, and are eligible for the highest posts in the land. Wherein consists the difference or distinction between the two, the present writer is unable to find.

Is it not to our interest to work together in concert and harmony, for we pursue the same goal: the intellectual and material prosperity of India? In mutual help and co-operation lies our hope, in division and dissension our feebleness and death. The Hindu and Mohamedan question is of but recent growth. It was unheard of in the last generation, though both the Hindus and Mohamedans were then much more orthodox than they now are. The Hindus and Mohamedans were animated by one common spirit and kindled by one common zeal, and that was mutual brotherhood. The Mohamedans joined them in their festivities, shared in their joys, and stood by them in their sorrows, and they returned the compliment. The success of one was the joy of the other. The sorrow of the one was the sorrow of the other. There was a warm feeling of sympathy, and a strong feeling of responsibility for the less fortunate sections of the two communities.

How different things then were to what they now are. We have called for a separate election, apparently on the ground that we cannot trust the Hindus. We have got it, but we are not at all sure that it will help the cause, dear to all who are interested in tranquil

peace, assured order, and intellectual and material progress of India—the cause of the union of the Hindus and Mohamedans. Could we cement good feeling between us by suggesting distrust? No! A thousand times no! But if the Mohamedans are to blame, the present writer cannot acquit the Hindus of blame altogether. They are ahead of us in both wealth and learning, and we expect from them help and sympathy. Do we get it? Very little indeed, if at all.

This feeling of estrangement is growing worse day by day. Ought we not to heal the breach, to bridge the gulf, if we have really the good of India at heart?

While Faizi and Kabir Das represent the subtle, intellectual influence working to a common goal—namely, the union of Hinduism and Islam, and the creation of mutual love and esteem and regard between the two communities, Ajmere points to a more palpable, tangible, practical result. There, at the shrine of the great Khajah, religious differences have almost reached their vanishing point. No privilege, no distinction, does the Mohamedan there enjoy over his Hindu compatriot. The same feeling of reverence and devotion which inspires one inspires the other. The same treatment is meted out to one as is meted out to the other. There do both go and pray with folded hands and bended knee. There, as nowhere else, do you see the glorious triumph of the feeling of mutual brotherhood rising above petty, trivial, meaningless forms and conventionalities, which, outside the hallowed precincts of Ajmere,

have rent Hindus and Mohamedans in twain, begetting fierce hatred and implacable animosity, which neither reason nor prudence nor education have succeeded in hushing into silence.

The laurel, the palm, and the pæan to thee, O Khajah, for having, at least in Ajmere, effected an enduring reconciliation between these two great communities, and united them in the silken bonds of brotherly love and esteem.

VIII

UNITY.

" My own hope is a sun will pierce
 The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;
 That after Last, returns the First,
 Though a wide compass round be fetched,
 That what began best, can't end worst,
 Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

BROWNING.

We have tried to show that, with us, religion has now become a solemn farce stripped of spiritual truth and steeped in barren tradition and practice. Religious knowledge, with us, suffers not only from ignorance but from an excess of fiction and falsification. We are too deeply rooted in the past, and it would be almost impossible to obtain a hearing if you were to preach that it is time to take stock of the treasures, religious and intellectual, bequeathed to us; to accept and retain those which are still acceptable; to reject those which are effete and time-worn. Such a proposition would at once be branded as perilously near irrevorence, impiety, irreligion; nay, apostasy. The

position taken up is somewhat this: our religion and our law are divine. No human wisdom can improve upon them or has a right or power to modify or alter or add to or subtract from them. Our fealty to this doctrine must, on no account, waver or falter if we are to remain good Muslims. This is the foundation stone of our faith, as it is conceived to-day. I confess there is a sweet fascination about the past and all that belongs to the past. What is grey with years, says Schiller, to man is Godlike. But this idolatrous enthusiasm must be kept well within bounds, or we run the risk of closing all avenues to progress. Is this attitude anything new to Muslims? No! It has a history of its own—a very deep, interesting, instructive history. If we ascend the stream of time and look backward to that dark and dismal period which followed the murder of Othman, we will find that Islamic unity was already a thing of the past. New passions, new interests had come into play; interests and passions not always very clean or pure either.

Under the Omayyads it was the Arab heathenism that was in the ascendant; under the Abbasids scepticism and indifference to religion alternating with rabid fanaticism; under the Turks and Moguls servile imitation unrelieved by a single ray of originality. The period of real, original, solid, substantial, intellectual activity coincides with the period of unbounded luxury and widest sway—namely, the age of the Abbasids. But beneath the glory and splendour, transient, fleeting, and evanescent, there is one feature standing out in bold relief—and that is the absence of slow, steady, continuous, broadening pro-

gress. Either there is a sudden burst of intellectual sunshine and material prosperity, or there is the engirdling gulf of deepest intellectual and material decay and decline. The only explanation that we can suggest for this phenomenon is that in the East all movements, whatever be their character, owe their origin not so much to popular feeling and conscience, as to the towering genius of some local potentate, some mystical enthusiast, some far-sighted sovereign standing on a pinnacle, high and above his age. In other words, all eastern movements are from without and not from within. They do not respond to a deep-felt need on the part of the people, but are not unlike a rainbow radiance, bright, brilliant, beautiful, but alas! too brief, too momentary, too short-lived. But along with this we must not omit to mention another cause much too deep and far-reaching in oriental life. I mean the intimate relation which exists between religion on the one hand and social life and the legal system on the other. For the eastern, everything, the minutest detail of his prosaic common-place life, is regulated by religion. Religion is the ultimate source, the divine basis, the fountain head from which rules of life are drawn. He cannot separate municipal from religious laws, and hence progress to him is a defiance of a divinely-ordained system.

In the Islamic history we perceive two unequal periods: the period when the whole body of the floating laws, ritual and ceremonial, are in a state of vague uncertainty; and secondly the period when they are set into shape. Thenceforward the standard of Muslim manhood, minted by authority, is fixed and

determined to the end of time, and any departure from it is akin to apostasy. I do not for one moment contend that this is what Islam requires, but this is what its interpreters would have us believe. It is then that we see the unedifying spectacle of religious sects rising armed with credentials and weapons invented and forged to support their claim or establish their right. Of these sects we have no less than seventy-two—a very respectable figure, to be sure! It was an age fertile in forgeries; nor was there any means (for the science of criticism is essentially a modern science) whereby to detect and discredit such forgeries. There was a whole armoury of forged tradition from which each party drew its authority to meet the other. Thus did religious sects, standing on the sure foundation of what they deemed genuine traditions, settle down to fight no longer non-Muslims but to fight and decimate each other. And thus each sect is well supplied with its store-house of these forged traditions which it would be reckoned impious to doubt or to call into question.

For the essentials of Islam we need hardly travel beyond the Qur'an—a book which will be read to the last generation of man—a book so human in its ineffable tenderness—so divine in its triumphant consecration of calamity—a true song of human life pervaded by dignified sweetness and a sunny purity of light. But though it is conceded by these warring sects that the Qur'an is the pillar of religion, the basis of Islam, they would have something over and above it. And the moment they overstep its boundary there is a weltering chaos of disunion and disagree-

ment about this or that—mere airy nothings, unsubstantial shadows, meaningless quibbles.

Every Mohamedan belongs to one of these sects and is the inheritor of a long-continued feud with the members of the other sects. Well might a reasonable man sit and watch, a bewildered spectator, at this vast and unintelligible drama enacted every day of our life. Imagine the fight over the question whether *Amin* should be said aloud or not; whether the prayer should be performed with hands above or below the breast, and such-like twaddle. The result is that each Mohamedan sect, so to speak, is an organized camp, armed to the teeth, to strike at the others.

The *Sunnis* are perpetually at war with the *Shiahs*, the *Hanafis* and *Shiahs* at war with the *Wahabis*, and *vice versa*. At the beginning of this year the present writer happened to visit Lucknow. While going from the station to the house of a friend whose guest he was, he saw a posse of police, with glistening bayonets, pacing up and down the main road. Surprised at the unusual display of arms in a city apparently quiet and unshaken by any tumult or upheaval, he was informed that it was to maintain peace between *Shiahs* and *Sunnis*. Well might we heave a deep sigh at a sight such as this! Has Islam, after all, brought a sword on earth? Has time turned its precepts of brotherly love and fraternal unity into sad, mocking derision? Are we to live in a house so cruelly divided against itself? Can we, with distrust and hatred and contempt for our brothers-in-faith, do any good to ourselves, our religion, or our community,

so sorely in need of help and pilotage in the dark waters in which it struggles? These were the mournful thoughts which were irresistibly borne in upon me as my carriage swiftly glided down the road.

If my reading of Islamic history is right, it was precisely these very divisions which destroyed Islam as a political force, and it is precisely these very divisions which render our modern Islamic Powers incapable of union. These very divisions meet us, in our own community to-day, in their grim, tragic, fearful hideousness.

Should we not say with William Watson :

“Though dark, O God, Thy course and track,
I think Thou must at least have meant,
That nought which lives should wholly lack
The things that are more excellent.”

Shall we not investigate the causes of this wasting, corrupting disease which is sucking the very life-blood out of our community and is making it a by-word for all that is useless and ignoble in life? I am inclined to ascribe this present retrogressive condition of our people to three causes : (1) Blind acquiescence in the ordering that has come down from the past; (2) the decline of Oriental studies; (3) want of progressive standards.

We are much too prone to accept things as they are. We shrink, with horror, from the idea of considering the utility or otherwise of institutions that have come down to us from the past. It is partly due to the feeling of pain which every breach with the past involves, and partly due to the religious character with which every institution has been,

more or less, hallowed. Climatic influences have also a great deal to do with this dormant attitude of mind, but I am disposed to believe that such influences are somewhat over-rated. The Eastern to some extent is, by temperament, mystical and dreamy rather than practical, but this does not mean that with him progress is an impossibility. Witness the marvellously rapid growth of Japan! and yet the Japanese are essentially an Asiatic race. Nor would I ascribe this backward condition of the Muslims to their religion. Their religion is essentially broad, expansive, progressive. Then what is the cause of this seemingly hopeless lethargy if it is neither climate nor religion? It is their aversion to change, their refusal to move with the time. They would rather dwell under the shadow of old traditions and institutions than adapt themselves to the growing needs of the age. They need direction and guidance, but they have none to direct and guide. The Muslim mind has not been able to rise (because there is none to draw them to it) to commercial enterprise with all that it involves; organization of industry, invention, machinery, trusts, stock and share markets. And Professor Margoliouth tells us that, according to an authority on Constantinople, a bank or insurance office run by Muslims would be regarded as portentous; where the hand of Europeans has not interfered, the camel or the horse is still the only available means of locomotion, the earth the only store-house of treasure. Then the prohibition as to taking of interest on money. It is fatal to commercial activity, for

capital cannot be raised when no remuneration on it can be promised ; and thus co-operation, which lies at the root of modern enterprise, is annihilated. Whether this prohibition is really a religious ordinance the present writer has much doubt, but whether it is so or not it is worth considering whether it should not be avoided or at least evaded by legal fiction. But, as stated above, it is the too servile adhesion to the past which stands seriously in our way. It is impossible to have advancing standards, moral, ethical, social, intellectual, if we once accept that whatever is, is right. It is an insurmountable barrier to the creation of a new kingdom of feeling and sensation and thought, which need not necessarily be opposed to the existing spiritual system, but which must certainly be beyond it and independent of it, if it is to be at all an accession to human culture. The creation of this new kingdom of feeling and sensation and thought ought to be our effort, aim and solemn endeavour. It will take time, but we must prepare the ground for it, must take a step towards it, and not remain lapped in pleasant, self-complacent slumber. And how are we to embark upon our task ? By infusing a new life into our educational curriculum. My friend, Mr. Justice Abdur Rahim, in his admirable address to the Madras graduates, tells us what the home life of a Mohamedan is. "I will just tell you," says he, "what the home life is of a young man in a well-regulated Mohamedan household of which I can claim to speak with some knowledge. Every Mohamedan child has his ears filled with the cry of 'God is

great and there is no God but God,' the God who to him is the embodiment of the highest perfection ; he is taught not to begin any work or duty of the day or any undertaking of life, great and small, but in the name of 'God' the kind, the merciful ; he learns to thank the Almighty whenever his efforts are crowned with success and to trust in Him all the more if he fails, to bend the knees of devotion every now and then each day ; every day he repeats and pores with loving reverence over the words of the Qur'an, whose divine eloquence has an abiding place in every Mohamedan's heart ; he is brought up to find the keenest pleasure in the practice of the most rigid self-denial for one month in each year, and the practice of charity and kindness towards his neighbours is impressed upon him as a legal duty and a high spiritual privilege. Thus brought up a Mohamedan youth can be trusted never to swerve from his faith." This is what Mr. Rahim says about a Mohamedan home, and I admire his lyrical and rapturous enthusiasm. But is this a correct picture of things as they are ? To begin with the conception of God. Let it be clearly understood that what I am now going to say is not what I believe to be the conception of the deity as portrayed by Islam. But my observations are mainly confined to the views of our modern Mohamedans. The one thing which strikes me about it (and I would not have noticed it but for the fact that it vastly colours our religious views) is that God, as fashioned by our co-religionists, is an exact type of an oriental ruler. It is not love but fear that

is more prominently emphasised. He is conceived as vindictive, unmerciful, occupied in tedious matters hostile to all gaiety and juvenility; totally uninterested in the human race, except in so far that He regards their transgressions with morbid asperity and a kind of gloomy satisfaction, as giving Him an opportunity of exercising coercive discipline. It is this which our children are taught to believe. So long as the beautiful innocence of childhood continues, I frankly admit, this belief acts with sensitive children as a sort of deterrent, but the moment they begin to think for themselves the whole thing vanishes as a dream and is followed by a reaction which not infrequently lands them in scepticism and irreligion. There is a great deal of truth and force in what Mr. Arthur Christopher Benson suggests: "Considering how entirely creatures of sense children are, it has seemed to me since that it would be well if their simplest pleasures, the material surroundings of their lives, were connected with the idea of God—if they felt that what they enjoyed was sent by Him; if it were said of a toy that 'God sends you this,' or of some domestic festivity that 'God hopes that you will be happy to-day'—it appears to me that we should have less of that dreary philosophy which connects 'God's will' only with moments of bereavement and suffering. If we could only feel with Job, that God, who sends us so much that is sweet and wholesome, has equally the right to send us what is evil, we could early grow to recognize that, when the greater part of our lives is made up of what

is desirable and interesting, and when we cling to life and the hope of happiness with so unerring an instinct it is probable, nay, certain, that our afflictions must be ultimately intended to minister to the fulness of joy." It is love rather than fear, the forgiving rather than the severe, the merciful rather than the cruel character of Divinity that we should impress upon our children. And this is exactly what we do not do. Why not teach that prayer is acceptable to God and you should therefore pray; charity pleasing unto Him and you should therefore be charitable; fasting a divine ordinance, for the discipline of the body and soul, and therefore you should fast; pilgrimage to Mekka an institution to draw you nearer unto His prophet, and therefore you should make a pilgrimage? Would not this be more appealing to childhood, "bright as truth and frailer than a toy," than the doctrine that for disobedience the punishment is eternal, enduring Hell-fire? And above all, why not teach them the supremest of all religious lessons—the lesson that no service of bended knee or of humbled head is of any avail if the heart is not pure and the hand not clean?

Then Mr. Abdur Rahim speaks of the unceasing study of the Qur'an. Yes! children are taught the Qur'an. It is almost the first book that they read. But how do they read it? It is as well that we should be disenchanted and know the truth. The land of dreams is so rich, so beautiful, so new, but alas! it will not help us in grappling with our difficulties, in rectifying our defects. We will not recline in a false security nor will we solve the problem by

overlooking its difficulties. Yes ! the Qur'an is taught, but in how many well-regulated houses do the boys know sufficient Arabic to understand the language of God ? They read the Qur'an like parrots, without knowing what it means. Its sweetness is wasted on the desert air. Is such study likely to have any influence over their thought and conduct ? I most distinctly hold not. I consider the years spent over the study of the Qur'an in this fashion as years utterly wasted and thrown away. I am firmly convinced that so far as a sound, substantial spiritual teaching is concerned the Mohamedan youth has nothing, or next to nothing. Take, for instance, the five daily prayers, one of the cardinal tenets of our religion, how few of the members of the "well-regulated family" perform them or care to perform them. This does not betoken much religious enthusiasm. As for fasting, it is an institution which is gradually dying out in the higher circles. We need not talk of pilgrimage to Mekka. It has fallen on evil times. The modern Mekka is Europe, and most of the members of the "well-regulated family" go there for the purpose of pilgrimage.

The picture that Mr. Abdur Rahim draws is an ideal picture ; it is a picture of things *not* as they exist but as they should exist ; *not* of a Mohamedan as he is but as he should be ; and in this I am in perfect agreement with him. And if all that he says does come to pass, and I fervently hope that it will come to pass, then the ideal Mohamedan youth of the Madras Judge would be a Mohamedan youth who can be trusted never to swerve from his faith !

Now as to the study of Arabic ? It is the fashion, now, to look down with contempt on Oriental studies. I suppose this is owing to the fact that such studies have no commercial value. But, for us Mohamedans, they have a value far higher and deeper than the value which can be assessed in gold. Our sacred book is in Arabic, and it is perfectly futile to try to enter into the spirit of our religion without knowledge of the language which embodies its sacred book, its laws, its tenets, its precepts, its very spirit. It is through these alone that we can hope to maintain our individuality as a community, and to justify our existence as such. But the studies must be broad-based. With all our reverence and devotion to our religion we do not believe that the moral and other laws are not to be learned by experience and observation, but solely by the study of the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet. This view I hold to be utterly unsupported by our religion, and I shall presently endeavour to show that it is a wholly unfounded doctrine, without any religious basis or sanction for it. But this is no new limitation or bar fixed against progress by latter-day Islam. It dates much earlier. It is a heritage handed down to us by the medieval schoolmen of Islam—a remnant of days when intellect was fettered and shackled by the bondage of faith in the authority and wisdom of great masters. It is a relic of the days when people were persuaded that all that was worth being done was already done, and no human wisdom could surpass or excel it. This fatal doctrine tended to cramp and circumscribe the intellect. “Such a system means” (the system which relies solely

on the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet), says Professor Margoliouth, "banging the door in the face of observation and experience ; it places the legislation of the community in the hands of theologians, pedants, grammarians, excluding therefrom the men of practical wisdom and experience. The day that Europe emancipated itself from such a system was the day whereon European progress and superiority commenced. It seems to have been this principle which caused the vast sums spent by Muslim sovereigns on educational establishments and the endowment of research to have perished without leaving education or research the better for them. For what was endowed was not the study of life and reality, the working of cause and effect in Nature, the evils of society and their cure, but solely the text of ancient books, lists of authorities through whom traditions had been handed down, the mode by which questions of casuistry could be solved out of the recognized authorities."

The Oriental studies, out in India, have been more or less conducted on these very lines, and it is this that we must alter if we are to make these studies liberal, broadening, sustaining studies. It is not the slavish acceptance but well-considered adoption or rejection of views, principles, beliefs that must be the result of education. It is the power to think for oneself which is the highest gift of culture, and it is this that we must implant, foster, and strengthen. Honest doubt is better than half the creeds. Mr. Benson once more :

"What is, after all, the aim of education ? I suppose it is two-fold : firstly, to make of the mind a

bright, keen, and effective instrument, capable of seeing a point, of grappling with a difficulty, of presenting facts or thoughts with clearness and precision. A young man properly educated should be able to detect a fallacy, to correct by acquired clear-sightedness a false logical position. He should not be at the mercy of any new theory which may be presented to him in a specious and attractive shape. That is, I suppose, the negative side. Then, secondly, he should have a cultivated taste for intellectual things, a power of enjoyment; he should not bow meekly to authority in the matter of literature, and force himself into the admiration of what is prescribed, but he should be possessed of a dignified and wholesome originality; he should have his own taste clearly defined. If his bent is historical, he should be eagerly interested in any masterly presentation of historical theory, whether new or old; if philosophical, he should keep abreast of modern speculation; if purely literary, he should be able to return hour after hour to masterpieces that breathe and burn." Thus far Mr. Benson. Our educational authorities should well weigh and well consider every word of this advice.

For the present, however, we are only concerned with Oriental studies, but the principle set forth by Mr. Benson is as applicable to these as to any other study. Instead of teaching our Oriental students old-fashioned logic, commentaries on the Qur'an, voluminous books on traditions, a slight smattering of law—all at once—it would be infinitely more profitable to give them a good grip of the language, and then allow them to choose their own course—be it

history, literature, science, law, or philosophy—and along with it a little original thinking and original work. Under the present system it is inconceivable for a student to think for himself, his earliest lesson being never to doubt or question what has come down from the past. Fresh to work with an emancipated mind and intellect, they will be the prophets of a new dispensation, and not what they are now, traffickers of silly, foolish superstitions.

Now we come to the last question we have proposed to discuss in this chapter. Is Islam hostile to progress?

I will emphatically answer this question in the negative. Islam, stripped of its theology, is a perfectly simple religion. Its cardinal principle is belief in one God and belief in Mohamed as his apostle. The rest is mere accretion, superfluity. The Qur'an, rightly understood and interpreted, is a spiritual guide, containing counsels and putting forward ideals to be followed by the faithful, rather than a *corpus juris civilis* to be accepted for all time. It was never the intention of the Prophet—and no enlightened Muslim believes that it ever was—to lay down immutable rules, or to set up a system of law which was to be binding upon humanity apart from considerations of time and place and the growing necessities arising from changed conditions. The Prophet always emphatically asserted that he was a man of like passions with others, except that he was entrusted with a revelation.

True, for the purposes of order and security and the preservation and maintenance of the new society created by Islam, he laid down rules regulating mar-

riage, inheritance, and so forth, but these rules were mostly of a very elementary character, and were intended to meet the existing conditions of things. The position of Mohamed, indeed, was that of a spiritual teacher, a prophet, and not that of a legislator. In the infancy of human society there is but a faint line of demarcation between law and religion, the two being inseparably connected with each other. With advancing civilization the line becomes clearer and sharper, and religion and law become separate and distinct. Such was the case at Rome, and such has been the case at Mekka.

All respect and honour is due to the law laid down by Mohamed, but the very fact that Muslim jurisprudence grew into a stupendous fabric within an incredibly short time, partly by interpretation and partly by adoption of foreign rules, unmistakably proves that the legislation of the Prophet of Arabia made no claim to finality. It shows, beyond doubt or cavil, that the law of the Prophet was neither wide nor comprehensive enough to cover the newly-arisen conditions of life in which Muslims found themselves after their brilliant and extensive conquests. Fully conscious of this, indeed, were the great jurists of Islam, and but for this, Islamic law would have remained fragmentary and insufficient for a highly-developed society like that of Baghdad or Cairo or Cordova.

It would be an error to suppose that Muslim law—regulating the minutest details of life—is *entirely* based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah; it is, to be sure, the creation of the great jurists of Islam.

"By far the greatest portion of the Muslim law," says Nawawi (one of our famous theologians), "is the outcome of *true inquiry*; for the actual passages of the Qur'an and the Sunnah have not contributed a hundredth part to it". The Mohamedans were fully alive to the necessity of modifying their law as time went by. Modification of the law, in accordance with the spirit of the times and the requirements of the age, was one of the most important duties of the Nazar-ul-Mazalim (Board for the inspection of grievances), one of the finest institutions of the Caliphate. It lasted from the time of Abdul Malik to that of the Caliph Muhtadi, and in connection with this institution our great publicist Al-Mawardi notes that the *President of the Board had to decide not according to the letter of the law, but according to the principles of equity.*

And yet Lord Cromer says that "Islam, speaking not so much through the Qur'an as the traditions which cluster round the Qur'an, crystallizes religion and law into one whole, with the result that all elasticity is taken away from the social system." This statement of Lord Cromer is entirely belied by the history of Islam, and is wholly untenable in the light of well-authenticated facts.

"The epoch of systematization, sifting discussion and glosses," says Von Kremer, "followed the unfettered love of work and creative energies. Polemical literature and voluminous commentaries on old masters poured forth in unending streams. They soon began to look upon the great doctors of the earlier centuries as men whose works could not be rivalled or surpassed

by their later successors. They entertained the belief that those alone were endowed with the divine gift of explaining the revelations and the Sunnah, and that they alone had known and taught all knowledge more than which was wrong to know. And such unrivalled masters of sciences and learning, besides the companions of the Prophet and Tabi'un, were the founders of the four schools: Malik, Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal."

If the Mohamedans chose to follow blindly the lead of these great jurists, surely it is not the fault of Islam. Islam is no more to blame for it than Christianity is to blame for the fierce persecutions committed in its name. We now come to Mohamedan law.

Is Mohamedan law fixed and immutable? Is it against Islam to make changes in it or to adapt it to modern conditions? The Prophet, as we have stated, was no legislator. He dealt with some pressing questions of the day and met them as well as he could. Keen-sighted as Mohamed was, he fully realized that cases would occur, in course of time, unprovided for in the Qur'an, and it is the consciousness of this fact that we find unequivocally expressed in a tradition, not to be impeached even by the most orthodox Muslim. Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud and Darimee relate that when deputing Mu'adh to Yaman, the Prophet asked him how he was to judge the people. "I will judge them according to the Book of God," said Mu'adh. Thereupon Mohamed asked him: "And if you do not find it in the Book of God?" Mu'adh replied: "I will judge according to the precedent of the Prophet." But

once more was he questioned by the Prophet, "If there be no such precedent?" Rejoined Mu'adh: "*I will make efforts to form my own judgment.*" This answer commended itself to the Prophet and he rendered thanks to God for the judicious opinion of his delegate.

I will make efforts to form my own judgment was the significant answer, and let the reader bear this in mind. The Prophet (it is abundantly clear from this tradition) never intended to fetter the exercise of private judgment, and the propounders of the doctrine of the finality of Mohamedan law may be challenged to quote one single saying of the Prophet, or to cite one single passage of the Qur'an, which fetters the exercise of private judgment or prohibits legislation to meet altered circumstances. Let us now examine the history of the growth of Mohamedan law. Its most conspicuous feature is the attempt made by the founders of the various systems to suit the law to the requirements of the age. Moulvi Chiragh Ali, in his admirable monograph on "the proposed political, legal and social reforms," mentions no less than nineteen founders of the various systems of jurisprudence. These founders never assumed the attitude of laying down the law for ever, and indeed such an assumption would have been wholly untenable. Nay, the Hanbali system of jurisprudence emphatically asserts that there should be a Mujtahid in every age. The constituent elements of Mohamedan law are (1) the Qur'an, (2) the traditions of the Prophet, (3) the Ijma—*i.e.*, the consensus of opinion of the Mohamedan doctors on a point of civil or canon law (4) Qias—*i.e.*, analogy. With regard to the Qur'an it is to be noted

that deductions have been made from a single word or isolated passages—deductions purely fanciful and not infrequently utterly unsupported by the language of the text. The Ayat-ul-Ahkam (verses dealing with law) are supposed to be 200 out of 6,000 verses of the Qur'an, but a more careful scrutiny and a closer observation would, perhaps, narrow down such verses still more considerably. The next source of Mohamedan law are the traditions of the Prophet. It is well-known that the traditions were not collected, sifted, or arranged, until the third century of the Hijra, and the principle on which the selection was made cannot but be pronounced by us as imperfect and defective to a degree. It hardly corresponds to anything approaching our modern method of criticism. But apart from this it is nowhere to be found that Mohamed enjoined the collection of the traditions, or directed the foundation of the municipal law upon the basis of traditions. It is impossible for me to deal with traditions in general here, or to enter into their defects and imperfections. I may be permitted, however, to refer the reader to the masterly examination of the traditions and the principles which governed their collection, or the reasons to which most of them owed their existence, by Dr. Goldziher in his scholarly *Muhammedanische Studien* and to the last chapter of Von Kremer's *Culturgeschichte des Orients* (Vol. I). Suffice it to say that not one out of a thousand traditions would stand the test of the canons of modern criticism. Then comes Ijma, as the third source of Muslim law. But some of the greatest Muslim theologians, as Moulvi Chiragh Ali points out (p. 21),

have disputed the authority or the binding force of Ijma :

" Shaikh Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi, a Spanish writer of great authority and sanctity (died in A.H 638.) ; Abu Sulaiman Da'ud Dhahiri, a learned doctor of Ispahahan and the founder of the Dhahirite (Exteriorist) school of jurisprudence ; Abu Hatim Mohamed bin Habban Al Tamimi Al-Basti, generally known as Ibn Habban (died A.H 354.) : Abu Mohamed Ali Ibn Hazm, a Spanish theologian of great repute (died A.H. 400) ; and according to one report, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (died A.H 241.) denounce the authority of any Ijma other than that of the Companions of the Prophet ; while Ibn Ishaq Ibrahim Ibn Sayyar Al-Nadhdham, generally known as Nadhdham, (died A.H 231.) and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, according to another report, deny the existence of any Ijma whether of the Companions or the Muslims in general. Imam Malik, the famous legist and founder of the second school of jurisprudence, admitted the authority of Ijma of the Medinites only and not of anyone else."

Finally comes the Qiás. It means analogical reasonings based on the Qur'an, traditions or Ijma. It is not, therefore, an independent source of law, but rules of law drawn from the Qur'an, traditions and Ijma on the basis of analogical reasoning. What then is the position ? The Qur'anic texts dealing with law proper are extremely few, and those few deal with primitive conditions of society. The law evolved from the traditions can scarcely be trusted ; since they themselves are not sufficiently well-authenticated or established according to the canons of modern

criticism. The binding force of *Ijma* has been disputed by some and rejected by others. And *Qiâs* after all is mere private opinion, which can claim neither divine sanction, nor infallibility, nor finality either.

If Mohamedan law in the past has borrowed from Roman law—and we have undoubted traces of it in Islamic jurisprudence—what is there now reasonably to prevent Mohamedans from adopting and accepting suitable rules of law drawn from the more advanced European systems? Many rules of Roman law, specially those relating to bailment, guardianship, wills and procedure, have made their way into the Islamic system. “In a two-fold manner,” says Von Kremer, “the Arabs acquired knowledge of those foreign ideas which we detect in Muslim law: either by daily intercourse with subject nations, from which discussions on questions of spiritual and temporal laws could not have been absent, or through the medium of Rabbinical literature. As to the former source, we would draw attention to the two jurists, *Auza'i* and *Shafi'i*, who were both born in Syria, and had, doubtless, there become familiar with many of the Roman Byzantine rules of law, surviving in the shape of customary laws. To these jurists, indeed, we must ascribe those general maxims which have been taken from the Roman and bodily incorporated into the Muslim law; for instance, the maxim that proof lies upon the plaintiff (*Al-Isbat al-Muddâ'i*), the definition of pledge given by *Abu Shuj'a*, the oldest *Shâfi'ite* jurist accessible to us, and which literally corresponds with the definition of pledge in Roman

law, or the maxim *confessus pro judicato*, which is expressed in the Arab system by *Iqrar* (legal confession). On commercial law were such Roman influences most decisive, and this fact offers additional proof of the soundness of the conjecture hazarded above, that apart from books and the Jewish medium, the Arabs gradually, and in a certain measure unconsciously, absorbed and assimilated, by contact with the people among whom the Roman Byzantine law obtained, many of its guiding principles."

And Dr. Goldziher holds that even if we had no other positive data to go by, the very name given to jurisprudence in Islam from the beginning attests the influence of Roman law :

" It is called Al-Fikh, reasonableness, and those who pursue the study of it are designated *Fukaha* (singular *Fakih*). These terms, which, as we cannot fail to see, are Arabic translations of the Roman (*juris*) *prudentia* and *prudentes*, would be a clear indication of one of the chief sources of Islamite jurisprudence, even if we had no positive data to prove that this influence extended both to questions of the principle of legal deduction and to particular legal provisions." Besides the positive rules of law drawn from Roman sources to meet new social and economic conditions in conquered countries, Dr. Goldziher considers that the profoundest influence of Roman law is to be seen in the system of legal deduction in Islam. He says : " But even apart from the adoption of legal standards, Roman law exercised a notable influence upon the legal thought of the new intruders into a country whose jurists had been trained in the scienc-

tific jurisprudence of the school of Berytus. The influence exercised by the Roman legal methods on the system of legal deduction in Islam is a more important factor in the history of Muslim civilization than even the direct adoption of particular points of law. By what systematic rules or what devices can deductions be drawn from positive laws, written or traditional, which shall apply to newly arising cases at law and to the decision of legal questions for which the positive written law provides no answer? In dealing with this juridical problem the Arab *Fukaha* took their stand entirely upon the instruction they had gained from circles familiar with the work of Rome in the domain of law. The dualism of written law (Arabic *Nass*) and unwritten law is a mere reflection of the dualism of *Leges scriptae* and *Leges non scriptæ*. Just so, about half a century before, the Jewish jurists (called by a word which in its legal application is likewise a translation of the Roman term *jurisprudentes*) had been moved by their intercourse with the Romans to make the hitherto unrecognized distinction between *tora she-bitchethab*, or written law, and the *tora she-be'al-peh*, or oral law. The application of principles and rules borrowed from the methodology of Roman jurisprudence first made it possible to extend the limited legal material supplied by the Qur'an, and the old decisions which were accepted as the basis of the law, to other departments of juridical activity, of which these authorities had had no prevision. The *ratio legis* (*illa*), the principle of presumption, was applied to analogies (*Qiâs*) in words and things; nay, just as Roman legal practice gave great weight to the

294 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

opinio prudentium in legal deduction, so the Islamic *prudentes* assumed the prerogative of an authoritative subjective *opinio*; for *Ra'y*, as it is called in Arabic, is a literal translation of the Latin term. Of all these principles (which are not exhausted by the examples just cited) none more strikingly demonstrates the profound influence of Roman law on the development of legal opinion in Islam than that which is known in Arabic as *maslaha*, or *istilah*—i.e., the public weal and regard for the same. The significance of this principle lies in the licence it grants to the interpreter of the law to apply the legal standard in the manner best fitted to serve the public weal and interests. Here we recognize the Roman standard of the *utilitas publica*, which gives the interpreter of the law the right, by interpretation, and application, to wrest a plain and unambiguous law into something quite different from its original meaning, in the interests of the public weal."

I am well aware that the extreme wing of the orthodox party will scarcely subscribe to the opinion I have put forward; but their acceptance or condemnation, approval or disapproval of my view, cannot affect the historical and juridical aspect of this question. Even so close and circumspect an author as Maulvi Abdul Ali, surnamed *Bahr-ul-'ulum*, in his commentary on the *Mussulum-us-Subut*, writes as follows:

"Some people consider that *Ijtihad fil Madkhab*, relative independence in legislation, was closed after the death of Allama'i Nasafi, and *Ijtihad Mutlaq*, or absolute independence, had become extinct since the

four *Imams*. These men have gone so far as to make it incumbent on Muslims to follow one of these *Imams*. This is one of their many foolish ideas which has no authority for itself; nor should we pay any regard to what they say. They are among those in reference to whom the prophetical *Hadith* has it that they award their decision (*fatwa*) without knowledge, they go astray and mislead others. They have not understood that this assertion is a pretension to know the future, which is only known to God."

If I am in error I rejoice that I am in the distinguished company of *sarants* like Moulvi Abdul Ali and Moulvi Chiragh Ali. Such is the broad outline of the history of Muslim jurisprudence, and it is perfectly idle to contend either that Islamic law is inflexible, or that the Islamic social system is inelastic. A machine is rigid—an organism vitally flexible. The one *exists* the other *lives*. It is the ambition of the writer to see Islam an organism—a vital force in perfect correspondence with its living environment—the modern progressive world.

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री राष्ट्रीय प्रशासन अकादमी, दिल्ली
Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration Library

४८८

MUSSOORIE

यह पुस्तक निम्नांकित तारीख तक वापिस करनी है।

This book is to be returned on the date last stamped.

808.84

Khu

111861

अवालि संचया

Acc No. 3637

वर्ग संचया

Class No. _____

पुस्तक संचया

Book No. _____

लेखक

Author Khuda Bakhsh, S

शीर्पक

808.84

Khu

LIBRARY

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

National Academy of Administration

MUSSOORIE

3637

Accession No. 111861

- Books are issued for 15 days only but may have to be recalled earlier if urgently required.
- An over-due charge of 25 Paise per day per volume will be charged.
- Books may be renewed on request, at the discretion of the Librarian.
- Periodicals, Rare and Reference books may not be issued and may be